

MONTHLY COVERAGE OF FANTASTIC FILMS • No 86 • OCT • 1991 • £1.20

S

TARBURST

THE EMERALD FOREST

Nicholas Roeg's
INSIGNIFICANCE

Ron Howard's
COCOON

plus FREE Cocoon poster

Douglas Adams talks about
THE HITCHHIKERS GUIDE

CLINT EASTWOOD'S Cannes conversation



**Volume 8, Number 2
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Left top: Pale Rider Clint Eastwood, and below left: Michael Emil and Theresa Russell in *Insignificance*. This page: Ron Howard's *Cocoon* and below: Charley Boorman in *The Emerald Forest*.



◆ contents ◆



FEATURES

- ◆ **STAY TUNED** TV fantasy/drama anthologies are back! Tony Crawley reports on the *New Twilight Zone*, *Amazing Stories*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, and others 10
- ◆ **AMAZON STORY** John Boorman recounts his own lengthy pursuit of a project that almost never was – *The Emerald Forest* 11
- ◆ **TRAILBLAZING** Clint Eastwood taciturnly talks about life in front of and behind the cameras at his Malpaso 'ranch' 20
- ◆ **EVERYBODY IN THE POOL!** A photo feature on Ron Howard's new marine science fantasy – *Cocoon*. Bring your Kleenex! 26
- ◆ **HITCH-HIKER** Douglas Adams on *Life*, *The Universe and Everything* – well almost 28
- ◆ **E=MC²** Gary Busey, one of the stars of Nicolas Roeg's myth-meddling *Insignificance*, discusses Joe DiMaggio and other weighty issues 35

REGULARS

- ◆ **FEEDBACK** A plea for broadening the definition of fantasy, and a reader considers that it might be best for *Doctor Who* to call it a day 4
- ◆ **THINGS TO COME** Part two of Tony Crawley's Cannes Report, featuring Hollywood's new time-tripping fever, Cannon's *Superman* and more Spielberg sagas 6
- ◆ **FILM REVIEWS** *Cocoon*, *Insignificance*, *Lifeforce*, *Crimes of Passion*, *Pale Rider* 16
- ◆ **TV ZONE** Richard Holliss adjusts to *The Avengers*, old and new; and two different versions of *V* 32
- ◆ **FANTASY BOOKSHELF** *The Wasp Factory*, *The TARDIS Inside Out*, *Throwback*, *Bats Out of Hell*, *Banquets of the Black Widowers*, *Creature* 40
- ◆ **VIDEO VIEW** Barry Forshaw reviews *Repo Man*, *Sheena*, *The Return of Captain Invincible*, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *The Company of Wolves*, among others, on tape 42
- ◆ **IT'S ONLY A MOVIE** So what have the Duke of Edinburgh, Barry Norman and Smiths Crisps in common? "Only *THE BROSNAN* knows!" 45
- ◆ **THE FILING CABINET OF DR SALLY GARY** 46

◆ BONUS COCOON POSTER!

FEEDBACK

ROBIN RULES

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your excellent interview with Richard Carpenter in issue 83.

Ever since a friend brain-washed me one weekend into watching every single episode, I've been a keen follower of the series.

Now comes the question. Is there a club for fans of *Robin of Sherwood*? And if not, would anybody like to get together to form one? Thank you for your time, and please do keep up the good work.

Lynn Hester,
Pollok,
Glasgow.

A BETTER READ

I've been collecting *Starburst* since issue 36 and I must say that issue 82 is the best I've seen. In your 80 editorial you said that TV and comics would be covered more fully, and you carried it out in 82. The article on *Danger Man*, and the one on movie comics were well written and informative. As others have pointed out, you have neglected TV in the past, and full length articles such as that one will make up for it. As for comics, as a collector myself, I'd like to see more articles, perhaps regularly, both on new and old comics.

However, there is another aspect of fantasy that could do with more coverage; that of books. Firstly, you hardly ever review movie novels. Information as to whether a book of a film is a good read, faithful, or contains scenes cut from the film would help someone looking for a suitable souvenir from a film.

Secondly, you seem to cover only "highbrow" novels. Reviews of books from Douglas Adams, E.C. Tubbs and other authors who churn out good novels that you don't need PhDs in psychology and



Above: At Home in Sherwood – Michael Praed and Judi Trott with quadruped friends. Below right: Anthony Daniels and Mark Hamill (right) repeat their screen roles in the radio series of Star Wars.

science to understand wouldn't come amiss. Some of the books featured in past reviews I haven't personally seen in any bookstore I've visited.

Thirdly, you could keep us up to date on new and prospective releases instead of printing a review a couple of months after the book is published. Lastly, let's have more articles on the writers themselves. The only one I can remember reading was about Frank Herbert – a few issues back.

My suggestion: make *Fantasy Bookshelf* two or three pages long and improve it to match the suggestions above.

lan Massey,
York.

RADIO REBELS

After reading S. Kill's letter in SB82, I feel he/she had a few holes in the letter about the *Star Wars* saga. I would like

to point out some of the facts. There is no way that Anakin can crawl out of the volcano, and nobody can save him. Once you are in the red hot lava you'd be incinerated in seconds, like the scene in *Star Trek 3* where Kruge, after being kicked in the face by Kirk, fell into the molten lava below. If Anakin fell in a pit is it possible that he could have saved himself?

Also, before Princess Leia was taken prisoner by Darth Vader, she was on her way to the planet Diplowa (if that's the right spelling). According to the radio series, it was there where she intercepted the plans of the Death Star before heading for Tatooine where she was taken prisoner.

Talking about the radio series, did you know that *The Empire Strikes Back* was serialised? It was, but it was not broadcasted in this country. The series started on 14th February 1982 on the radio in

America. *The Return Of The Jedi* was not serialised. According to *Empire*, Luke was promoted to commander after the rest of the Rebel fleet was ambushed on the way to the Hoth system. All of them were destroyed.



For those who do not remember about the original *Star Wars* radio series, here is an episode guide.

Episode 1: *A Wind to Shake the Stars* (13/4/81);
Episode 2: *Points Of Origin* (14/4/81);
Episode 3: *Black Knight, White Princess & Pawns* (15/4/81);
Episode 4: *While Giants Mark Time* (16/4/81);

Episode 5: *Jedi That Was; Jedi To Be* (17/4/81);
Episode 6: *The Millennium Falcon Deal* (20/4/81);
Episode 7: *The Han Solo Solution* (21/4/81);
Episode 8: *Death Star's Transit* (22/4/81);
Episode 9: *Rogues, Rebels & Robots* (23/4/81);
Episode 10: *The Millennium Falcon Irregulars* (24/4/81);
Episode 11: *The Jedi Nexus* (27/4/81);
Episode 12: *The Case For Rebellion* (28/4/81);
Episode 13: *Force & Counterforce* (29/4/81);

Since then the radio series was repeated twice. That was the summer of 1981 and 1983. At that time the BBC put *Star Wars* on Saturday mornings at 2.30am. *The Empire Strikes Back* radio series was in ten parts.

Vilmore Rochester,
 Peckham,
 London.

FANTASTIC DRIVEL

While I enjoyed issue 81 of your excellent magazine immensely, it highlighted, for me, one of your most annoying habits. Namely your insistence on printing articles on films with little or no merits to recommend them. In 81, it was *Baby*. Now why were four pages of valuable space wasted on this piece of inept drivels?

OK, so it's *Fantasy*, and this is a fantasy magazine, granted. But there are plenty of films with fantastic elements in them which are far more accomplished than *Children of the Corn*, *Jaws 3D* or the horribly boring *Dune*. Now you have had overlong articles on all of these films (and I could name more, but you figure them out), and yet you still ignore films like *Zelig* or *Rumblefish*. *Rumblefish* had some stunning sets, strange camera angles, an offbeat score and it was set in the future. What more can you want?

Also there are films which have been made by directors and writers who have worked in our genre and have moved on to other things, such as Sayles and Landis. There aren't many films like these, so why don't you de-

vote just a little space to them?

But enough of this revolutionary talk. Great to see you're going to do something on comics and animation, two excellent, yet often unrecognised, parts of our genre.

Graham Linehan,
 Co. Dublin.

DETERIORATING DOCTOR

I was glad to see issue 82 of *Starburst* followed on from the 'TV Special' by giving coverage to shows such as *Danger Man* and *Doctor Who*.

While I agree with Graham William's letter that there

are many TV SF programmes still ignored, not least *Timeslip* (Seventies version), and *The Tomorrow People*, I cannot accept that you should pass over the massive contribution of *Doctor Who* to the genre. The same, of course, cannot be said about *Star Trek*, but enough has been said about Sally Gary's article which included many of the facts from *The Making of Star Trek*. This is enough to show there is nothing new left to say about a TV series cancelled over ten years ago, which had ever drop of blood squeezed out of it by cult groups long ago.

Doctor Who is another matter. Despite threats to axe it, it continues, making articles like Richard Holliss'

review always relevant if somewhat late.

I must admit that I agreed with most of what Mr Holliss had to say. Last season's scripts were pathetic. They reminded me of very bad SF films, which rely on a series of images with no connection other than the fact they fulfil the accepted clichés of the genre. Monster attacked, slaves revolted, space-ships exploded, aliens ate people, but if you stopped to wonder why, the whole thing became meaningless.

It is a pity that you didn't run a feature on the reasons for *Doctor Who*'s suspension. I am afraid the idea that it is a publicity stunt by the BBC to raise the licence fee doesn't hold water. A number of other series (*Miss Marples*, *The Tripods*) have been axed with little or no publicity. Series are being cut due to a genuine lack of money. It seems crazy that every time the BBC says it's short of cash, then it has to cut production standards. Yet people demand that the BBC does not increase the licence fee.

As for why *Doctor Who* was suspended that is difficult to determine. One answer that I have never come across, is that the BBC wanted to improve the ratings by returning the series to a 26-episode format, covering the advantageous autumn and winter seasons (*Doctor Who*'s traditional place in the schedules). As *Doctor Who* now occupies a winter season slot to effect, such a change required nothing less than an 18-month gap. Had *Doctor Who* returned this Autumn the BBC would have had to make two whole seasons in the space of one year, and they definitely can't afford that. Nor do *Doctor Who*'s ratings warrant it.

Doctor Who has faced cancellation before, and has always emerged the better for a rethink (like Jon Pertwee's early seasons). Unfortunately, the current producer has suggested the only new format he wants is 25-minute episodes. With such a relentlessly unimaginative production team, perhaps cancellation is best.

Timothy Robins,
 Cardiff.



Deterioration threatens the Doctor.



Woody Allen (centre) as the human Chamelson Zelig, with his 'girl of the moment' Mia Farrow.

Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME

CANNES '85 SUPER-CANNON-BALL!

Before continuing the rest of the news from the 38th Cannes festival, a quick look-see around the rest of the filmworld. Most astonishing being that a deal that was put down as a ridiculous rumour only at Cannes has now been signed. Cannon Films has bought out the Salkinds' rights and will make all future Superman films...! Not, it is hoped, with the Lemon Popsicle cast. Nor, judging by the mess he's made of *Lifeforce*, with Tobe Hooper in command. But it looks as if the tales that Chris Reeve was being offered \$5 million to get back in his long-johns for may now come true. Cannon, after all, claim to have paid Stallone \$12 million for a film next year. Doesn't say, though, with unusual reticence how much it paid for the Super rights.

RE-ENTER: SPIELBERG

Better news is that Steven Spielberg is directing again. A movie, that is. He started shooting, as planned on June 6. The Colour Purple, already talked of as being his Oscar-winner. If just the film wins, they'll need four statuettes for the producers: Spielberg, his usual back-up duo, Frank Marshall and Kathy Kennedy, and Quincy Jones. Menno Meyjes, new to me, scripted Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prizewinning book and E.T.'s (in fact, the original Amblin's) Allen Daviau is on camera down there in North Carolina. No room for Rae Dawn Chong, after all, among the cast headed by Whoopi Goldberg – less than a year after her debut at Los Angeles' Comedy Store led to her one-person show on Broadway and her Drama Desk prize. Also in the movie: Danny Glover, Margaret Avery, Willard Pugh, Oprah Winfrey (love that name!) Akosua Busia and the veteran Oscar-nominee from *Soldier's Story* Adolph Caesar.

... & MAX SPIELBERG!

It's a boy! St. Steven's other production was a week late. Amy Irving had his son in Santa Monica on 13 June. Max Samuel Spielberg has a lot of good movies to catch up on... Most likely he'll start in Britain. I hear that dad's moving here for two years for *Indy III* and Peter Pan – on which the latest scam is that little Dustin Hoffman will be the tall, menacing Captain Hook. Really?

Okay, back now to cringing-in-the-rain at Cannes '85...

MANDRAKE LIVES!

In a crowded Majestic bar, I conducted my shortest interview on record with director Bob Swaim. Q. *Mandrake still on?* A: Sure is! Well, the magician's film has been anything but stable since Julien Temple and Lee Falk, *Mandrake's* creator, told me their plans for it... oh, must have been three Cannes ago, by now. Temple, rather unwisely, was dropped from the project and the film itself, seemed buried until Swaim, the American-in-Paris who made *La Balance*, took it on. He's completely re-vamped the original Goldcrest script with American novelist William Hjortsberg (Ridley Scott's Legend scenarist) and is all ready to go. With, I gather, the Sophie's

Choice and Big Chill star Kevin Kline making screen magic.

THEME OF THE YEAR

Schwarzenegger has really started something... Spaceships are out. So, time-tripping is in. Terminator was hardly first, of course. The Japanese have been time-warping whole armies from one century to another... which led to *The Final Countdown* (more like *Letdown*) and *The Philadelphia Experiment* (which was Phila something else). Nick Meyer's *Time After Time* and Jim Cameron's *Terminator* simply worked better.

Now they're all at it. Spielberg does it with his *Back To The Future* production – a 1985 kid goes back to a rock-less '55 and meets his parents as teenagers. (Oh, very Spielbergian). Even Johnny Hough's *Biggles*, flying high in 1917, has to be aided (for the US box-office?) by a Yank popping in and out from 1985. Columbia's biggest Italian hit since *Ghostbusters* is a parochial comedy. Nothing Left To Do But Cry, has bright comics Roberto Benigni and Massimo Troisi (they also directed) as '85ers warping back to 1492. They stop Columbus from going off to find America 'so all those Indians don't wind up on reservations'.... or Christopher Columbus on TV? Very much in the Tokyo tradition, the space jockey hero of *Time Warp* is flung into World War I and meets a lowly corporal named Hitler

WORLD WAR IV

Animation takes time. It was during Cannes 1983 that the Belgian cartoonist Picha – creator of *Tar-zoon*, *Shame of the Jungle* and *The Missing Link* – first mentioned his third feature, *The Big Bang*. It hasn't banged yet, although there was a zany clip of some of it at Cannes this year. Two years ago, Picha (born Jean-Paul Walravens) began storyboarding ideas as *Spitting Image* creator, Tony Hendra, wrote the script. Last summer I met both of them, hard at it in their Paris studio, with their

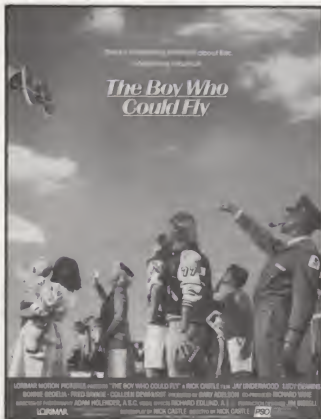
full-time crew of 80 artists.

At Cannes this year, Picha and his producer, Boris Szulzinger, said the film would be out by Christmas. We have a treat in store. Set in the future, when America and Russia combine forces in opposition to their war-hating womenfolk, *The Big Bang* is really the story of an over-the-hill superhero trying to prevent World War IV. Presumably on the understanding that WW III will have happened before the film can open. Animation takes time.

SUPER BOY..?

John Carpenter's mate on the rise, Nick Castle, has found himself a new partner in Gary Adelson, son of the Lorimar chief. Nick and Gary first teamed up for *The Last Starfighter*. They've been in Vancouver shooting *The Boy Who Could Fly*. Jay Underwood is the teenage Birdy and Lucy Deakins is the 13-year-old who brings about the miracle. Also cast: Bonnie Bedelia, Colleen Dewhurst and dear ole Herman Munster, himself, Fred Gwynne.

Rather like Carpenter, Nick also nicks Amblin folk for his team: E.T.'s production designer Jim Bissell and the location manager from that film, Dick Vane, is on-board, promoted to co-producer. By now, they're all back in LA, where Richard Edlund is handling the SPFX, once Poltergeist II is in the can.



Above: "Is it a bird? Is it a plane?" No it's *The Boy Who Could Fly*. Right: "Use your head," Russian director Leonid Menaker's *Professor Powell's Testament*, adapted from Belyaev's book *Professor Dowell's Head*.

HERR SPIELBERG?

One director I wanted to meet never showed. Must've heard about the rain. He's another of the West German *wunderkinds* greatly influenced by toys, Hollywood and above all, Spielberg. First, Wolfgang Petersen. Now, Roland Emmerich, 28. He made a dazzling debut last year. Instead of re-making his student films as a feature, like Lucas and *THX 1138*, or Kevin Reynolds and *Fandango*, Roland got enough money together and made his graduation film as a feature. *The Noah's Ark Principle* was invited to the '84 Berlin fest and snapped up by MGM. He's since shot his second film, *Joey*. I had the outline long before *Noah* as I'm fascinated by parapsychological issues, reincarnation and, of course, children's toys.

How does he turn all that into a movie? Simple. *Joey* is nine and "vehemently affected" by the death of his father. Until he finds he can talk to him on his toy phone. "This contact endows him with supernatural powers . . . great new games! But they become difficult to control, terrifying, dangerous. To get out of this conflict, *Joey* must go to his father and then be sent back to life—the most wonderful and certainly the most expensive sequence. Everybody who read the script said this was an American movie (not to say *Amblin*), so we shot it in English." Next? "A comedy about monsters," says Roland Emmerich. "About a toy-maker finding one of his toys is alive. I'd call it . . . *Hollywood Monster*." What else?

MISSING LINK

Everyone from Link was missing at Cannes. With good reason. Richard Franklin was still shooting his movie in Scotland. It's the movie which Franklin preferred to *Psycho III*. And all very secret. I dug around and found it's about a US girl student taking a summer job in Britain—assistant to Prof. Phillips. When he goes missing, she's trapped in his house (deserted, of course) with Link, a chimp with eight times her strength and speed and trained to near human levels of intelligence. Now read on. . .

Elizabeth Shue is the student and Terence Stamp plays the professor. And the chimps are one helluva problem during shooting. I gather. Sounds like a job for Rick Baker.

. . . AND ORIN

A somewhat better version of much the same story—ie. Star Wars revisited—was the Korean-American 3D animation feature, *Starchaser: The Legend of Orin*. Again, nothing that special; 3D seemed a last-minute addition. Yet director Steve Hahn does spin his tale of miners enslaved by robots with rather more gusto than the once jolly Roger Christian managed with real (?) people. Hahn insists 3D was in his concept from the preliminary designs in November 1982. Layouts started by January '83 and the complex tri-di work had the movie requiring three years to complete and not the one he'd planned for. "There are not only separate drawings for the left and right eye, but also for each level of depth," explains Steve Hahn. "Foreground, characters and background would be animated separately and then shot together—quite a contrast to how Walt Disney did his 3D work through an optical process in the labs."

RUSSIAN SF

For once, Russia was absent from the competition. Plenty of Moscow movies in the market, though. Writer-director Leonid Menaker modernised noted Russian fantasist Alexander Belyaev's novel, *Professor Dowell's Head*. . . and our ole mate, *The Invisible Man*, from the 'Herbert Wells story', has some good SPFX but for Russia, an embarrassing collision of title and director. A chap named . . . Zakharov.



SPIELBERG SHOCK

Biggest shock at Cannes—a *Amblin* film searching hard for buyers in the market. *Fandango* is the feature debut of ex-lawyer Kevin Reynolds. Spielberg saw his 22-minute student film, *Proof*, and suggested expanding it into a feature. "I nearly freaked out," says Kevin. "That's only supposed to happen in movies." Getting Warner Brothers to back *Fandango* became part of Spielberg's price for making *Gremlins* for the studio. Both films started around the same time. Kevin's took ages to come out. Now, Warners has off-loaded it onto its subsidiary, Globe International, to sell off. Can't understand Warners' rejection. *Fandango* is lively, funny, terrific, a wondrous debut. Two of my most enjoyable hours in any Cannes cinema. It covers the road ventures of five college chums having their last orgy of liberty before Vietnam, the divergences, marriage. Best of the fine cast (including Lauren Bacall's son, Sam Robards) is Marvin J. McIntyre, repeating his *Proof* role of a mad, barnstorming flier—a twin of *Mad Max*'s Gyro Captain, Bruce Spence (also in Cannes in *Pallet on the Floor*). Love to see someone get 'em both in the same movie. . .

ony Crawley's THINGS TO COME

► NEATEST TITLE

... of the year, has to be ex-Mel Brooks man Rudy De Luca's vampire send-up. He calls it ... Transylvania 6-5000! New World is shooting it 20 miles outside Zagreb, thanks to a load of the Dow Chemical Company's frozen dinners in those Yugoslavian environs. Into The Night's Jeff Goldblum and Ed Begley Jr. are New York newsmen investigating the old country for monster stories. They meet plenty. A Frankenstein type called Hunyadi and a delicious vampire lady, played by Gwen Davis in a skin-tight outfit. Don't know if we'll see more of her but New World says there'll be more De Luca comedies about Jeff 'n' Ed. *Monsterbusters?*



NEAT VAMPIRETTA

Camp vampires are also in this year. A Woody Allen protegee, Howard Storm, has lately finished *Once Bitten*, his movie debut after helming *Laverne* and *Shirley*, *Mork* and *Mindy*, *Taxi*, etc. Howie's choice of vampirette is the very choice, gap-toothed, Lauren Hutton. To keep glowing, she needs a pinta male virgin blood a day. Not easy in L.A.! She checks out college campuses and a shy college kid thinks he's got it made. A real chic, older, experienced woman and all that. He doesn't know just how old she is ... Lauren's manservant is Cleavon Little, barely seen since Mel Brooks' *Blazing Saddles* (1974).

HAMMER II

Horror movies in the old Hammer tradition - that's the daim of the International Cinema Releasing combine ... whatever that is. Chap named Mark Chornivsky seems to be the guiding light. His current slate of work includes old Hammer hands Caroline Munro and Ralph Bates joining Michael Gothard, from *Tope Hooper's Life Force*, and Mausoleum blonde Bobbie Breese in *Grave's End* - directed by another ex-Hammersmith, Jimmy Sangster. *Fantastic Tales* (ex-Fantastic Film Festival) is an anthology number to include the Chornivsky Studios' short, *Strange Tangents* - and in preparation for 1987 is an SF horror, *Creatures of Darkness*.

LOST MOVIE GREATS

With *Variety* issuing daily news-sheets for the first time, we were better informed about movie deaths than usual when cocooned from all known forms of civilisation at Cannes. What a tragic list. Veteran Soviet director and '56 Cannes prizewinner Sergei Yutkevich, 80 ... Edmund O'Brien, 63, the screen's first Winston Smith in 1964, 1956-style ... Chaplin-find Dawn Addams, 54, seen in *Vampire Lovers*, *Vault of Horror* ... Margaret Hamilton, 83, the *Wicked Witch* in the original *Wizard of Oz* (1939) ... Frank Westmore, 62, last of the first generation of that amazing family of make-up experts ... and two Hammer folk: Hugh Burden, 72, from *Blood From The Mummy's Tomb*; George Pravda, 66, from *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed*.

& ADIEU, DUFFY.

They called him Duffy. His real name was Adolph Piccinni, an actor since childhood, fluent in several languages, and therefore accents, and in later years an actors' manager. He was 56 when he died. Who? The voice of Popeye.

TWEENAGE BOND

I know we ... well, I complain about Roger Mogue's age. Or, rather him showing it. But are we really ready for a teenage Bond? Looks that way with the corporate thinking of the Lance company formed by young Slapstick director Steven Paul ... and his parents. *Never Say Never Again* writer (?) Lorenzo Semple Jr. has come up with the Walther PPK-packing thriller. They call it *The Double O Kid*. Oh yes!

(NEWSFLASH: Oh no they don't. Now it's *Never Too Young To Die*. Sounds like Paul's line after *Slapstick* stuck).

CANNES CHATTER 'N' CLATTER

As expected, Randal (Grease) Kleiser and not De Palma taking over *Navigator* from John Avildsen ... Following Russia's *Invisible Man*, an Italian version for comic Francesco Salvi ... Jeannot Szwarc celebrated wrapping *Santa Claus* by marrying supervisor Cara de Manual ... Canada's Paul Lynch sequelising his *Prom Night* as *The Haunting of Hamilton High* ... Paul Bartel and Peter Hyams deserting us for comic capers ... A pre-Bond and Conan Grace Jones turns up in *Deadly Vengeance* ... Tired of waiting for something good from Lord George (into a third telework script!), Hollywood making a movie called *Lucas* ... There's another called *Carradine* ... But name of the month is owned by the guy proving *Young Einstein* invented rock 'n' roll. He's an Aussie comic called ... Yahoo Serious. Not a lot you can say about that. And stay out of the libel courts ...

ASTERIX ENCORE

French screen giant, Gamont, is hoping to rescue its financial doldrums with two new Asterix cartoons. The first, *Asterix and Caesar's Surprise*, is scripted from two of the Goscinny and Uderzo books by the man they call M'Sieur Cinema in France, Pierre Tcherina. The Brizzi brothers, Paul and Gaetan, directed it. Pino Van Lamsweerde takes over for *Asterix Chez Les Bretons*.



BAND ON THE RUN

Charley Band left Cannes smiling fit to bust. Who wouldn't? ... He'd been given an extra \$50 million to make movies with, via what's known in film/banking circles as a line of credit. First Band project to benefit from the finance-injection is SPFX man John Buechler's long-planned *Troll*, starring *Never Ending's* Noah Hathaway, *Pale Rider's* mate Michael Moriarty, last Charlie's Angel Shelley Hack and, for good measure, Cher's ex-hubby, Sonny Bono. Phew!

RE-ANIMATOR CONT'D.

Looks like Charley Band also used some of the cash for a new ad. art campaign for his production of H.P. Lovecraft's *Re-Animator* - "It will scare you to pieces," runs the hype, under a redrawn Jeffrey Combs as Herbert West. Charley can add another line to it now. Because despite what I said about the film last month (I was warned off it, a real stinker I was told at Cannes) it has become the surprise first winner of a new Paris film award, Le Prix Special.

'Tis a genuine surprise - not to say a downright shock! - as I was on the voting committee back in Paris after Cannes. I was aghast at seeing *Blood Simple* rejected because it had won too many prizes already (really!), *Crimes of Passion* rejected because Ken Russell was too famous (honestly!) and Paul Morrissey's *Mixed Blood* nixed due to the way it has been cut for its French release (an understandable move). I couldn't vote for *Re-Animator*, not having seen it. That lapse didn't seem to bother my colleagues. Stuart Gordon's movie won the prize, although of the 15 journalists voting, four only had actually viewed the film ... and one of those agreed it was a movie of very bad taste! I'm still trying to work out how it won ...



New Zealanders continue turning out better films than their Aussie neighbours. Apart from Geoff Murphy's *Quiet Earth*, a haunted car number called Mr. Wrong made history (and lotsa sales) as the first Kiwi film produced and directed by women. (Murphy had a hand in the script, based on Elizabeth Jane Howard's story). No feminist tract, although director Gaylene Preston commented: "You can't expect me, as a person who abhors sexism and sexual harassment, to make a traditional thriller in which the woman is a helpless victim, a sexual distraction for the hero or a passive motivator of the hero's action. So I made a modern Cinderella - what if the ball isn't worth going to and handsome princes are very thin on the ground ... and are just looking for a mother." Heather Bolton is the (real) heroine faced with a car which makes noises ... like someone's dying breaths. The ghost is of the woman murdered in the vehicle ... Steve King would love it!



Future Star. This is Family Ties TV star Michael J. Fox in his first movie. His second is *Amblin's* *Back To The Future*. He replaced Eric (Mask) Stoltz mid-way through the 12-week shoot about the high-schooler time-tripping back to '55 and meeting his parents as kids! And in his debut? Teen Wolf should give you a clue. He's a high-schooler again, but victim to his family's disease. He keeps becoming a werewolf. And plays better basketball that way. It's ... well ... Rocky With Claws.

FESTIVAL FOOTNOTE

So, that's Cannes '85. Or, as much of it as will interest you. But, I hear you ask, how important is Cannes? Charlton Heston scribbled in his diary that festivals were only valuable as a marketplace for independent film-makers trying to win distribution deals. "In terms of relating to film as art, they're nonsense." Not altogether there, Chuck. The art is (usually) there in the Cannes competition and The Directors' Fortnight selections. The 'entertainment' is in the market where new Indie movies are competing for deals with, noticeably, several movies unsold from previous years. Even if they are bought it can take ages to get on foreign screens. I noticed that my best discovery at Cannes '83, Dick Maas' Dutch thriller, *The Lift*, finally opened in New York this summer only. Dick had better luck than Telly Savalas, though ...

Telly was the cause of many a ritualistic paparazzi riot at Cannes '77 - when he was still Kojak. He ran around with a bevy of beauties in *Mati* tee-shirts, title of his first outing as writer-actor-director, still being edited at the time. "I'm totally pleased with it," he told me (and the world). "In acting and directing a picture, there's an element of spontaneity which is never predictable. We got all of that and a theme never touched upon before - a psychodrama with something to say." Since when - now! Well, finally a cassette out this year. The film is now *Beyond Reason* - exactly! Telly's co-star, Priscilla Barnes, has all but disappeared - silent when seen and obviously, badly replaced by Laura Johnson. It's a right old mess, despite much work on it by film doctor William Kowalcuk. What went wrong - exactly - I don't know. Savalas knew about directing. He'd shot six Kojaks, or more, and was making documentaries before becoming an actor.

Two big guys sporting the *Mati* tee-shirts at their Caroloco party for Telly couldn't care less anymore. Mario Kassar and Andy Vajna turned to a more genuine Movie Star next time. Fella named ... Rambo! ♦

AMERICAN TV SCREEN

With the second series of *Tales from the Darkside* doing the local US network rounds, and the new *Twilight Zone* taking up prime air time, it appears that TV anthologies are back! (In the US at least.) Expectations also remain high for Spielberg's upcoming *Amazing Stories*, and *Alfred Hitchcock's* classic TV thriller series is being re-shot and colourised. In his first report on stateside phosphor-dot fantasy and drama, Tony Crawley Presents...

Can you hear it...? Gounod's "Funeral March of a Marionette" is back on the airwaves. Weekly. Again. Followed by a lugubrious "Gud Evening" and a suitably sardonic message.

George Romero never knew what he was starting with the first of his *Tales From The Darkside* on Halloween night 1983. Now, everybody's into the act! Tele-anthologies are about to give those silly soaps a right poke in the eye. If these new shows take off. And that's difficult considering the tube's bland habits. *Dallas* and *Dynasty* have continuing themes and above all, stars. J.R. and Alexis. Anthologies have their main stars behind the camera supplying that which (American) television doesn't take kindly to. Surprises.

Never mind. The battle lines for American minds are drawn. The test-runs are on. At prime-time viewing hours, too. No more of the late night, wee small hours (or black/white) stuff.

CBS has its all-new *Twilight Zone* going out at 8pm, Fridays. ABC is hitting back with a top-secret, untitled Disney version. LBS supplies local networks with the second series of Romero's *Darkside*. HBO has shot a cablevision SF pilot of *David Cronenberg Presents*, as well as ordering a second skein of *Paige Fletcher's* journey into the unknown as *The Hitch-hiker*. (First series starred people as varied as Klaus Kinski, Robert Vaughn, Karen Black, Franco Nero and Bo Hopkins.)

But NBC has the real cream of the crop. Saturday nights at 8pm, it's Spielberg's *Amazing Stories*, which had better be good because they're followed, immediately, at 8.30pm by the tried and tested crowd-puller, the guy who once had Spielberg turfed off his set. Alfred Hitchcock is back!

MASTER OF MYSTERY

Yes, five years after the maestro's death, a year after the triumphant re-issue of the allegedly missing five Hitchcock films, his ghost is stalking the tube again. The best of his old 1955-65 NBC (and CBS) series have been re-shot. New directors. New casts. Hitch still hosts the shows, though. Entering his self-drawn profile sketch to his Gounod signature tune and making those quirky introductions (written by James B. Allardice).

Only difference – Hitch is, as they say, colourised now. His old pro- and epi-logues (he used to shoot about a dozen at a time over two days) have been

put through the mono-into-colour computer-colouring tank. (American TV viewers hate black-and-white, or they're told they hate it).

Yes, couldn't agree with you more... It sounds terrible. Apparently, it looks extremely good.

American TV critic Tony Scott, for one, adored the two-hour pilot show in May. So, for that



matter, did America. Hitch beat *Lace II* hands down in the ratings war. Inevitable, felt Scott. The revamped shows brought to "viewers' attention how good, indeed, those dramas were compared to what's passing for entertainment on TV today," he wrote.

Madison Avenue types, who busily vet all the new season's TV shows to find those with potentially the biggest audiences for their clients' commercials, do not seem so pleased. And not just because Hitch knocked their wares so mercilessly. "NBC is stressing the directors," complained one advertising executive. "But people don't watch directors. They watch stars!"

There's some truth in that. Not a lot, but some. That's why, say the New York wisecracks, anthologies didn't work the last time around when Sebastian Cabot hosted *Ghost Story* a couple of years back, and James Coburn invited us – briefly – into *Darkroom*, also made by Universal with directors like Carpenter-mate, Rick Rosenthal and Canada's Paul Lynch, in 1981.

Yes, well, Universal wasn't really trying then... Both shows went out at 9pm, too. Not late enough; or early enough.

But as we all well know, television anthologies, particularly Rod Serling's *Twilight Zone* or *Night Gallery* made many of today's directors. Despite his illustrious career and his signature walk-ons, Hitchcock was never that well known around the world until hosting his own TV show.

Madison Avenue may find they've booked their clients on the wrong shows, then. Because the fans of the cultish re-runs of Rod and Hitch and even *One Step Beyond* know the value of such programmes. Add to them the millions shelling out billions in America's summertime blitz of movies –

more for directors than stars this year – and you have a vast mass of viewers understandably excited at the prospect of Wes Craven or William Friedkin entering the *Twilight Zone*.

Not to mention Amblin's amazing list of directors... Spielberg, of course, Clint Eastwood, Martin Scorsese, Richard Donner, Peter Hyams, Paul Bartel... even David Lean!

TAMPERED TALES

The very idea of re-making Hitchcock annoys me. (I detest re-makes!) If the shows were good enough first time around, why not just repeat them. Colourise them if necessary – more to please Madison Ave. than the viewers. Such comments hold more true for movies, than television. I've seen a bunch of the old Hitch shows recently. They don't (all) hold up that well. The TV art has changed more radically than cinema and so they just look... old, archaic.

Ironically, the worst of the bunch was Hitchcock's penultimate TV job, the 230th of the *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* series (1955-62). Therefore, I'm not surprised to find it was the only actual Hitch episode re-shot for the May pilot: *Bang! You're Dead*. This is the Margery Vesper tale of a kid playing cowboys with a loaded revolver. Hitch took over the directing when the chosen helmsman fell ill. Hitch only ever shot one more – the fourth episode of his later *Alfred Hitchcock Hour* series (1962-64). Billy Mumy, Disney's Sixties' pride, played the gun-totin' devil on October 11, 1962. And sure enough, Mumy was back in the re-tread cast as a shop clerk. Randa Haines directed the show.

Andrew Mirisch is the supervising producer for Universal's re-made Hitches. Joel Olsansky, writer-director of one of Amy Irving's best films, *The Competition* (1980) handled *Incident In A Small Jail*, with Ned Beatty in Henry Slesar's old teleplay. Fred Walton, director of *When A Stranger Calls* (1979), took one James Bridges' *An Unlocked Window*, with Annette O'Toole (*Cat People*). Bruce Davison and the screen's most memorable hitchhiker, Helena Kallianiotis (*Five Easy Pieces*).

Other similar shows are in the works, like Mary Leander's novel, *Satan's Children*... and a camp, revamping of 1969's woodoo island safari, *Strange Paradise*. And then the *Dynasty*, *Hotel* and *Charlie's Angels* producer is keeping all bets open about which way the audience will go by making the first, hopefully the last, tele-mix of anthological suspense and soap-opera garbage: *Dark Mansions*. For the pilot show, Joan Fontaine suddenly replaced Loretta Young's much fanfared comeback when she fast-exited out of being Michael York's Mumy. Also cast: *Moonraker* star Lois Chiles (ex-Dallas, of course), Paul Shenar from *Scarface*, Melissa Sue Anderson finally out of that damned little house on the oh-so-twee prairie, and Raymond St. Jacques.

The producer? Aaron Spelling. He has the prerequisite background. He starred with Joseph Cotten in *Breakdown* – Hitchcock's first TV-directing job, but the seventh aired – on November 13, 1955.

John Boorman's new film, *The Emerald Forest* charts familiar mythic terrain – laced with a hint of mysticism – under which lies a contemporary caveat on the plight of the world's rapidly disappearing rain forests. The film casts Boorman's son, Charley, in the starring role, and makes breathtaking use of the talent of cinematographer Phillippe Rousselot. Tony Crawley spoke to them at the Cannes Film Festival.

“Movie-making is the process of turning money into light.”

John Boorman

8th October, 1972. *The Los Angeles Times* runs a story about a Peruvian engineer finding his son – kidnapped by Indians ten years before – as the chief of the remote Mayuruna people. Screenwriter Rospo Pallenberg shows the cutting to John Boorman – ‘it haunts me’ – as they work at the director's Wicklow home on the (alas) never made, live-action *Lord of the Rings*.

2nd June, 1982. In Los Angeles, Boorman meets with Pallenberg, who fishes out the tattered cutting. Again, Boorman is still haunted. And no wonder, the tale has all the hallmarks of another Boorman brush with what he calls ‘the lost connection’ with civilisation's mythic past.



The Disappearing Forest



► "I was intrigued," Boorman records in his diary, "that this father would spend every vacation for ten years searching the rain forest for his abducted son. But even more extraordinary, when he found him, an integrated member of an Indian tribe, he elected to leave him there. What had father and son become in those ten years? Ten thousand years of human progress divided them. Does blood, kin, reach across that divide?"

He titles the story *The Emerald Forest* and shows it to MGM, 20th Century Fox, the Ladd Company, Columbia, Orion, Warners, who pass over it. "All this lack of enthusiasm from Hollywood encourages me that we are on to something good."

Today's Hollywood is not the place where Boorman made *Point Blank* in 1966, nor which backed *Deliverance* (1972). Today's

Hollywood is captive to the computers running the ex-agents running the studios. "The big problem in the States now," Boorman claims, "is that all major films are marketed with TV advertising. So, the marketing people *decide* which films are made. They ask: How do you express this film in a 30-second TV commercial? And if the content is too complex to get across in 30 seconds, they say:

"I think Dad chose me because he needed somebody capable of surviving in the jungle for eight months. That includes the two months' training with the rest of the film's Indian tribe. We lived out in the jungle, slept in hammocks, in grass huts, no walls, just pillars."

Charley Boorman

Don't make the movie!

"Worse than that, when they're thinking of doing a film, they send people into supermarkets and ask: 'Would you like to see a film about a creature from outer space, stranded on earth and adopted by a suburban family of kids?' And they say: 'No!' Columbia had a million dollars into it but dropped *E.T.* because of research like that!"

1983. Boorman escapes such confines when Britain's Goldcrest backs *Emerald Forest* . . . and starts flogging it at the Cannes festival. Throughout that year, Boorman is commuting to Brazil in search of locations, permissions, anthropological aid, casting the film's Indian tribe, working on production and make-up designs (the Indians are to be known as The Invisible People), testing a (dropped) method of the tribe speaking Tupi and shadowing their lines in English, hiring animals from Los Angeles, a falconer and two eagles from France, picking a crew, avoiding name stars who would increase the budget, building a tribal village, hunting for a dam, erecting a miniature of it to be blown up.

He even wins a rare invitation to stay with the Kamairi tribe of the upper Alto Xingu. They're wary of white men. With good reason. In 1600, when there was only six million people in Britain, there were four million Indians in Brazil. Today? Fewer than 200,000. And it's not only the Indians who Mankind has killed in the name of progress, but the delicate eco-balance of the Amazon rain forest which provides 35 per cent of the world's oxygen.

Put all that in a 30-second commercial!

1984. After 18 months preparation, and just four weeks from shooting, Goldcrest pulls the plug. Luckily for him, the Goldcrest who loved the script, Jake Eberts, had moved to Embassy in America and persuades his new combine to take the film on. And so, Boorman's latest movie quest is now a Hollywood venture.

20th May, 1985. *The Emerald Forest* is invited to close the 38th

Cannes festival. The Euro-critics love it – they love John Boorman – the rest aren't so sure. (Two months later, the film's a smash in Paris.) Charley Boorman is hailed as a revelation or classed as no better than the lead in a fifth form play.

Starburst: You've taken a true story and woven it into a fairy tale – almost a time-travel fantasy...

John Boorman: Yes. It presents itself as being a true story, then becomes something else. Mythic. Some people find that a problem because the film actually changes and starts again on another level. For me, one of the attractions was the way it dramatised this conflict between two worlds, represented by father and son. Father is the engineer building a dam, itself a symbol of technology, of a society wanting to tame and conquer nature. Control it! Son is with this other group, which belongs to an earlier time, who live in a totally harmonious way with their environment and still have this magical connection with the spirit... remembering all we've forgotten. This notion of the lost connection was very much the theme of *Excalibur*. It's a theme that has preoccupied me quite a lot in my films.

In this way, the engineer (Powers Boothe) is able to go into the past and have this experience of being connected with their world, coming back to his world a changed man... ready to destroy the dam he's built and, therefore, everything he's stood for. What we're saying is that if we're going to find a way to live more harmoniously with our environment – and if this planet is to survive, we have to do that – it's going to require enormous sacrifices. Maybe, we have to blow up a few dams.

Your biographer, Michel Ciment, says the film is yet another remake of John Ford's *The Searchers* (1956). That's hardly right...?

It's a film I admire a lot. I looked at it again before working on the script with Rospo.

Very honest of you to admit it!

(Laugh.) Very interesting to look at *The Searchers*' attitude – that the girl has been defiled by being taken by the Indians. Impossible for her to be accepted by white society. She's

"The whole process of my growing up was speeded up making that film. I got very much into the way of the Indians. They still have that natural freedom we've lost. It's changed me completely."

Charley Boorman

tainted! In my film, the perspective is more from the inside of the Indian tribe. The opposite view. They regard the white world as a dead world, the people as Termite People. Like... ghosts. When Wanadi, the chief of the Invisible People, takes

Tommy, he says: 'Well, he smiled at me, I didn't have the heart to send him back to this dead world.' Rather like finding a fledgling bird fallen from a nest and taking it home to care for it... In a sense, this film begins where *The Searchers* ends... more the story of what happens after the search.

All your films are...

Yes.

I mean this is another Boorman quest film. Yet, having found Charley, the father leaves him there. Could you have done that?

Left him there, you mean? That was such an intriguing thing about the story – having a son of the same age. No, I wouldn't have left him. But that's because I've known him for all those ten years. Had I not, ►



Top: left: Bill Markham (Powers Boothe) searches for his son in the heart of the Amazon rain forest. Middle, far left: Father and son reunion. Below: 'The Blue Lagoon' in the Emerald Forest.

*Below: John Bowman directs the *Indigenous People*. Far right: Tomme's (trial) wife-to-be Kachiri (Dila Posa) (right) and friend.*



► had I found him as he is in the film ... involved, he has a wife, responsibilities, he's the new leader

"There were only major problems. No minor ones. No. 1, the visual problem. Seen from a helicopter, or on the river, the forest looks very beautiful. Once you're in it, it's the most disappointing thing you've ever seen ... You can't see anything ... All dark greens ... It's like night. Your light meter shows nothing! When there is sunlight, too much. We had to light everything. We had to rebuild the forest, too. Well, revisualise it. We were always adding vines and things. Not cutting anything away. We weren't allowed to, especially by John. Hardly in the spirit of the movie to go cutting the forest down."

Phillipe Rousselot

of his tribe ... Well, the father can't force him to leave, can he? His heart is torn.

They're no longer father and son, anyway, but equals — man and man.

That's correct. It is, on one level, a film about giving up children. Letting them go.

Did you ever find the real father during your research?

We did make an attempt but we couldn't find him. Then, we started working on the story and did a lot of research and found so many similar cases. There are actually 500 cases documented in the Americas of children being taken by the Indians. A recent one is documented by Adrian Cowell, the documentary filmmaker. In his latest, *The Decade of Destruction*. A seven-year-old Brazilian boy was taken by the Indians in revenge, after some settlers shot an Indian or two. An expedition was mounted to try and find him and Adrian Cowell went with it.

Did they find him?

It eventually transpired that the Indians had killed the boy ... He kept them awake with his crying and finally one of them stuck an arrow in him to shut him up ... There are so many cases, we began mixing different elements into the script. By the time we thought of trying to trace the Peruvian engineer again, imagination had already taken over. There is a point, as I'm sure you know, in any work of fiction, book or film, where you overtake the actual events and they become an inhibition to what you're doing.

Yeah, what's your line about it?

Fiction is merely truth, liberated from the facts.

The casting of Charley ...

... was a big problem! I was very attracted to the idea of Charley for a lot of reasons. I was also very reluctant to use him, afraid of the pressure it would put on him if it didn't work out. How would that affect him? And me, also! He finally got the role by default. I saw hundreds and hundreds of boys. In Los Angeles, the boys are phantoms, as though a cunning computer had succeeded in reproducing human beings so cleverly it was impossible to detect the fraud — yet it had left out just about everything that is important about a human being.

And the British?

Mostly scrawny, very few of the developed bodies one saw in California. Also: eccentric, introverted, caught up in private mythologies, many exhibiting a fierce, hostile intelligence ... not eager to please. They lack charm. They're disturbing, making one ill at ease. Chilling to see iron in such young souls. I just couldn't find one of the right age. I was very tempted by two or three of 20 or 21. When you're a middle-aged man like me, whether a boy's 17 or 20, it doesn't make much difference. But if you remember when you were 17, someone of 20 was from another generation! I felt you couldn't fudge that. He had to be 17, *vital* he was going through this process between boy and man.

Enter Charley ...

Charley has a slightly baby face, yet he's got a powerful body, so you could believe him capable of physical prowess. He also has the openness and directness I wanted. I think the reason for that is that Charley is heavily dyslexic. It's only in the last few years that he's been able to read and write. His perception of the world has been more visual. Perhaps this experience of the world has been close to that a boy might have, living in a primitive community rather than going through that whole academic system.

He says the film has changed his life. How about you?

The most profound experience for me was the time I spent living with the Kamaira tribe. A rare privilege. I was only able to do it with the intercession of Orlando Villas-Boas; this great man who saved the Brazilian Indians from extinction. He's been twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, and word has it that the Brazilian government discouraged it because what he did was save the Indians from systematic destruction by successive Brazilian governments. With his brother, Claudio, he has ensured that the Indians have this vast area in the Mato Grosso, where nobody can go. You need a special reason . . . anthropological research, for example. He arranged for me to go there. I had a tremendous friendship with Takuma, the Shaman of the Kamaira tribe, and the things I observed were the foundation for *The Invisible People* in the film.

You created your own tribe, though.

Yes. The Kamaira would've been wonderful actors but I made a decision very early on not to use tribal Indians because it would be destructive to their way of life. Which is what Herzog did (*Fitzcarraldo*) and got heavily criticised for – rightly, I think. Filmmaking has a pretty destructive effect on people of any walk of life, let alone people of that kind of culture, very fragile because of the pressures put upon it. We used detribalised Indians from the cities, or Indians born in the city and never having any experience of tribal life. We took them back in the jungle for two months and trained them. Charley took part in all of that.

I'd join them at their camp some nights. We'd all sleep in hammocks. There was one Indian who'd go into trance very easily. Absolutely frightening! He'd foam at the mouth, his whole body would vibrate and then this strange, dark voice. I was up there one night and there was Charley holding on to this guy – he was trying to get into the fire! I thought, how incredible it was

for Charley to have these sort of experiences at 17. And the Indians talked to him all the time. He absorbed it all.

And so, just another film. No problems!

(Laughs.) No difficulties, we just went out to the rain forest and shot it! We had all the kinds of problems you'd expect if you're foolish enough to go to the equatorial rain forest and try and make a movie there. Don't forget, every day you get torrential rain, for at least an hour. You have to stop – everything. The rain is so intense, if you stand in it, you can't even breathe. There's no air. Everything becomes water. Or vapour. So, the shooting day was very short, extremely hot. Inside, the forest is very humid. And it's full of creatures trying to eat you, bite you or sting you. You must accept that your body becomes part of the ecology of the rain forest, you're providing dinner for barbed thorns, spiked leaves, resins that burn, poisonous fruits, grasses that clutch you, ants that sting like snakes,

caterpillars whose hair brings up welts on your skin, tarantulas a foot across. The forest is home to more than half the planet's animal species. More than 1,500 different birds and 2,500 species of snake.

Not exactly Pinewood!

The biggest problem was the logistics of getting equipment and 200 people from one place to another, as we shot the film in locations as much as 1,500 miles apart. And then, always the problem of getting people ready to start shooting. There's a kind of national inertia in Brazil. No one can actually bring themselves to start something. Once it's started, everything's all right. But actually starting . . .

How did you solve that one?

Junior Homrich, who did the music, was with us all the time. If things started to lag, I'd signal to Junior and he'd start the beat going. Once the beat's going, everyone comes alive. In Brazil, everything goes with the beat. Everything! That's how you get things started. ■



FILM REVIEWS

COCOON

"A very special movie"

Close Encounters meets *On Golden Pond* in director Ron Howard's immaculately crafted valentine to something we all have to live with — old age. *Cocoon* is a very special movie. It offers the unusual treat of watching an impeccable ensemble of old Hollywood troupers doing what they do best — acting with gusto and consummate skill. This artistry is beautifully contained in a novel, bitter-sweet story that cuts deeply into emotional recesses hitherto unexplored by the usual major studio's fantasy product.

Don Ameche, Wilford Brinley, Hume Cronyn, Jack Gilford, Gwen Verdon, Maureen Stapleton, Jessica Tandy and Herta Ware are trying to live out their days with dignity in a far too peaceful Florida old people's home. Then some extra-terrestrials move in next door led by Brian Dennehy and Tahnee Welch, (Raquel's daughter). These Antareans have come back to Earth after 10,000 years to reclaim friends they left behind in cocoons on the sea bed after Atlantis, their previous base on the planet, submerged. They use the swimming pool in their rented villa as storage for the cocoons but, unknown to them, their elderly neighbours have been sneaking into make use of this facility. How these secret dips change all their lives and forge a bond with the friendly aliens that will alter their destiny is the main thrust of *Cocoon's* intelligent humanitarian approach.

Howard and screenwriter Tom Benedek do a miraculous job with what could have been a depressing and maudlin account in anybody else's hands, ie the "Kick the Can" episode of *Twilight Zone*. The harsh realities of all the characters, including Steve Guttenberg's wide boy role as the skipper of the boat employed to help the Antareans in their quest, are never skirted but approached positively with humour.



Tahnee Welch, one of the aliens in *Cocoon*.

Laughter and tears in *Cocoon* are tinged with a sweet sadness that is affecting, even noble. Laughter stems from the expertly drawn characterisations of the lead actors who, when rejuvenated by the water in the pool, hit the local night spots. And tears flow in the scenes depicting Cronyn and Tandy's marital problems which neatly underscores *Cocoon's* basic central message. No matter how old we get, we still have foibles and longings and

the desire to make mistakes on our own terms. Jack Gilford has the best sequence of all. His resolute stubbornness in not succumbing to the alien's 'Fountain of Youth' leads to the death of his wife. His distraught attempt at giving his deceased wife the treatment she needed too late is as deeply moving as anything I've witnessed for a long while.

Ron Howard's direction just has to be labelled as nothing short of superb. His delicate touch is perfect for the subject matter, as he showcases the actors and the story with a sensitivity devoid of flashiness. No further proof is needed (especially after *Splash*), that here is a major league director.

Alan Jones

Starring: Don Ameche (Art Selwyn), Wilford Brinley (Ben Lockett), Hume Cronyn (Joe Finley), Brian Dennehy (Walter), Jack Gilford (Bernie Lefkowitz), Steve Guttenberg (Jack Bonner), Maureen Stapleton (Mary Lockett), Jessica Tandy (Alma Finley), Gwen Verdon (Bess McCarthy), Herta Ware (Rose Lefkowitz), Tahnee Welch (Kitty). Directed by: Ron Howard. Screenplay by Tom Benedek. Produced by Richard D. Zanuck, David Brown, Lili Fini Zanuck.

LIFEFORCE

"LifeForce"

When Tobe Hooper's films are good, very good... when they're bad, they resemble *LifeForce*, or *LifeForce*.

This noisy, empty film qualifies as the remake of Hammer's *Quatermass and the Pit* you never even wanted to see.

Cannon's long-on-the-cards adaptation of Colin Wilson's *The Space Vampires* starts strongly in familiar atmospheric *Alien* territory, as the spaceship Churchill goes to investigate the interior of a strange craft lurking in the tail of Halley's comet. There, spaced-out Steve Railsback and crew discover three nude humanoid figures who turn out to be parasitic energy vampires destined to invade Earth. Once back on the ground, all hell breaks loose, narratively and cinematically. As soon as the naked 'Space Girl' (valiantly played by ▶

► Mathilda May), goes on her soul-sucking spree and actor Peter Firth utters his first line of hysterically funny dialogue, *LifeForce* takes a rapid turn for the worse and becomes deliriously awful. Tacky moments to treasure concern a visit to a mental asylum, a red flashing erotic dream sequence and a nymphomaniac nurse on a hitch-hiking rampage. When London is finally declared a state of emergency due to roaming packs of marauding zombies, who all seem in search of auditions for *Thriller*, the film just becomes embarrassing to watch. Gorgo and *The Giant Behemoth* made these sort of apocalyptic scenes far more believable and less cheap looking.

Shame on script-writers Dan O'Bannon and Don Jakoby for saddling the cast – consisting of ham English B-movie horror stalwarts – with the most

unspeakable lines to be heard in years. Railsback, Firth and Frank Finlay are good actors, but you would be forgiven for not noticing that here, since they are all reduced to bumbling, ranting fools.

Hooper's reverential approach to the subject matter consists of weird camera angles and frantic scenes trying to make up for the fact that most of the action takes place off screen. Rather than a homage to Hammer films – or more broadly Sixties British horror films – Hooper has crafted a cruel parody.

LifeForce does have its fair share of plus factors but not enough to make this anything more than you would expect a \$25 million Cannon movie to look like. John Dykstra's special effects are certainly pretty and Nick Maley's audio-animatronic living corpses passable even under the harsh light they

were inexplicably filmed in. Quite the nicest effect of all though, is a cosmic blood clot that takes the shape of the nubile Ms May.

Tobe Hooper's reputation certainly takes a downward spiral with *LifeForce*. It makes you wonder if all those stories about *Poltergeist* were true after all. For once I join voices with the American critic who was spot on with this summation – 'Plan 10 From Outer Space'. Indeed!

Alan Jones

Starring: Steve Railsback (Col. Tom Carlsen), Peter Firth (Col. Colin Caine), Frank Finlay (Dr Hans Fallada), Mathilda May (Space Girl), Patrick Stewart (Dr Armstrong), Nicholas Ball (Derebridge). Directed by Tobe Hooper. Produced by Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus. Screenplay by Dan O'Bannon and Don Jakoby. Based on *The Space Vampires* by Colin Wilson.

China Blue (Kathleen Turner) is disturbed by the sinister Reverend Shayne (Anthony Perkins), who has intentions to commit *Crimes of Passion*. Right: Theresa Russell debates the meaning of *Insignificance* with Tony Curtis.



CRIMES OF PASSION

"Enters my personal list of the top five films of all time."

Superlatives may well run out before the end of this review of Ken Russell's most controversial and daring film to date. At first glance *Crimes of Passion* seems to resemble the most up-market 'stalk and slash' film. But those of you solely on the lookout for cheap thrills – beware! Although by burn wildly humorous, and explicit both in dialogue and visual terms. All in a fashion that will

startle your complacency, the prime concern of *Crimes of Passion* is to expose the tarnished American Dream and the needless sexual conflict inherent in this permissive age. We all hide behind facades, and this mature and adult theme is made more trenchant by Russell's use of soft-core porn and gore film clichés to make points about the new set of problems now facing marital and extramarital relationships.

No two ways about it, *Crimes of Passion* is a brilliant film painfully revealing the fine line people tread between fantasy and reality, using sex as the modus operandi.

Crimes of Passion revolves around three disparate individuals whose lives become gradually intertwined. There's Joanna Crane, played by Kathleen Turner, a fashion designer by day, who by night becomes China Blue, one of the most sought after hookers on Hollywood Boulevard. Joanna hides behind the fantasy power games her alter-ego provides because she is absolutely terrified of commitment and intimacy. Quickly lured into China Blue's highly-charged seductive web is Bobby Grady, played by John Laughlin, who has been hired to investigate Joanna's mysterious extracurricular activities. And when he tastes China Blue's forbidden fruit he is forced to re-examine his marriage and middle-class values.

In addition to Grady, another far more sinister individual enters China Blue's twilight world of vicarious mechanised pleasures. He is the psychotic Reverend Peter Shayne, played by Anthony Perkins, who alternately wants to save or possess her soul. As an 'Eighties version of Jack the Ripper, he forces Joanna/China Blue to play one last sadistic game – a game which for the first time in her schizoid state of self-disgust she has no desire to play.

The incisive resonance and thought-provoking power of *Crimes of Passion* comes from the impeccable direction by Russell, the deftest and most well written script for ages by Barry (Kansas City Bomber/Making Love) Sandler, and the purposely tacky look provided by photographer Dick Bush. Just these three factors alone would raise the film to the loftiest of artistic pinnacles. But just to make sure the message touches and cuts even deeper emotionally, there is the greatest performance ever from Kathleen Turner. What she achieves with her dual role is nothing short of miraculous. She deserved an Oscar for this, the most penetrating and illuminating role of her career.

Amongst a fine ensemble of actors, Annie Potts as Grady's long-suffering consumer-orientated wife shines. And Anthony Perkins registers strongly too. Nobody plays dementia to the hilt like this actor. The ambivalence his character feels is succinctly defined, and the climactic nod to *Psycho* is nothing short of a masterstroke.

Although the film will only suffer minimal censor cuts in the UK – ones that Russell has said he can live with – no other film in recent memory has stayed in my mind as long as *Crimes of Passion* has. And it just gets better with

each successive viewing. From the first, to the last mischievous line of dialogue, Ken Russell forces our attention to the issues surrounding the one basic reason for our human existence. Only the most moral of the moral majority will remain unaffected by it.

Crimes of Passion enters my personal list of the top five films of all time. Can I possibly give this film any higher recommendation?

Alan Jones

Starring: Kathleen Turner (Joanna/China Blue), John Laughlin (Grady), Anthony Perkins (Shayne), Annie Potts (Amy). Directed by Ken Russell. Screenplay by Barry Sandler. Director of Photography: Richard Bush. Produced by Barry Sandler, Donald P. Borchers.



INSIGNIFICANCE

“... not insignificant, but it is slight.”

Insignificance, the latest film from Nicolas Roeg is, we are told from the press release, “The story of life, death, sex and the universe... relatively speaking.” It poses a hypothetical meeting on a sultry New York night, circa 1953, between an actress, a senator, a baseball player and a scientist. They all represent icons of the Fifties, and as such project an era and attitudes rather than separate individuals. They act as ciphers, connecting directly to the baggage of views that we carry to the cinema.

Marilyn Monroe, Albert Einstein, Joe DiMaggio and Joseph McCarthy may not carry equal significance with a modern audience, but each represents an aspect of the Fifties in America, a neglected decade. It doesn't matter

what transpired in 'real life', as the myths, especially generated through the cinema, are much stronger. So in the film, the senator is portrayed as the villain of the piece, his Machiavellian machinations are to be despised, his obsessions are displayed as a weakness in character that are meant to reassure us; he has no real power, as we have seen him impotent.

The actress, as we are led to believe from previous media reincarnations, has strength but is abused. In the film she is casually struck by the Senator and miscarries the child she desperately wanted. She bleeds internally, whereas the male cast, led by the professor, are allowed to bleed externally. The professor is obsessed by guilt, having been

responsible for 'the bomb', another potent Fifties' icon. His obsession is allowed full rein, as fantasy/reality sequences culminate in the Sixties (a decade full of icons) explosion of the material world contained in the blink of an eye. We see the room and the actress explode in a sequence reminiscent of the climax of *Zabriskie Point*.

Playing with time and walking with ghosts has been the hallmark of Nicolas Roeg's films, but since *The Man who fell to Earth* the old dog has not learnt any new tricks. Each film may refine the riff, but falls short of the intriguing paradoxes presented in his earlier works. We have travelled the path before and although the film is an enjoyable journey, it is over terrain that has become too familiar. The film may not be insignificant, but it is slight.

Richard Ashford

Starring: Gary Busey (The Ballplayer), Tony Curtis (The Senator), Michael Emil (The Professor), Theresa Russell (The Actress), Will Sampson (The elevator attendant). Directed by Nicolas Roeg, produced by Jeremy Thomas and Alexander Stuart, written by Terry Johnson.

DREAMCHILD

"Exquisite on every level"

Exquisite on every level, *DreamChild* is a film to cherish. Introverted adult fantasy has rarely reached the screen in such a mature and moving fashion. Thank the flawless screenplay by Dennis Potter, the impeccable direction by Gavin Millar and ensemble performances of the highest calibre for making *DreamChild* such a subtle, yet thought-provoking gem.

Detailing the heart-wrenching voyage towards self-discovery, old age and imminent death, *DreamChild* outlines the doctorate trip taken to New York by Alice Hargreaves, the original inspiration for Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Alice Hargreaves, née Liddell, so affected the Reverend Charles Dodgson in her youth that he wrote the book for her. Was his love pure, or did he have dark and passionate Freudian ulterior motives when he made the dedication in the romance? That is for the 80-year-old Alice to come to terms with, as we follow the feisty, moralistic English-woman abroad, out of depth in depression-ridden America and a capitalistic society she soon learns to live with.

All this soul-searching is told via vivid childhood recollections and nightmare encounters with the Jim Henson Creature-Workshop-designed characters from the pages of Dodgson's/Carroll's book. Sexually repressive Victorian scenes combine with the state-of-the-art malice in wonderland perfectly, and are seamlessly dovetailed into the main riveting narrative.

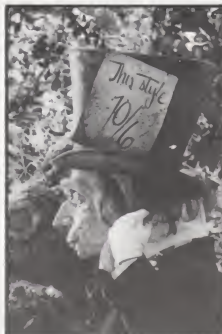
DreamChild never puts a foot wrong. Redefining Dodgson's suspect obsession with Alice this way, may or may not be authentic – more knowledgeable people than myself still argue the subject. But as a metaphor for self-analysis and insecurity, it is faultless.

From the miraculous production design by Roger Hall, which belies the minuscule budget, to Coral Brown's peerless acting, *DreamChild* reveals a loving touch in each frame from everyone concerned.

Watch the awards roll in for this classic British movie.

Alan Jones

Starring: Ian Holm (Charles Dodgson), Coral Brown (Alice Hargreaves). Directed by Gavin Millar. Produced by Nick McCallum. Written by Dennis Potter. Animatronics Designer: Lyle Conway.



PALE RIDER

"A must for Eastwood fans. He is even more inscrutable than ever, dominating the screen."

The Man with no Name is back in town. He comes in the guise of a mystic preacher, to save a precarious Californian gold rush community from destruction by an evil corporation.

But we're not fooled. We all know that it is Clint Eastwood behind that dog collar, a mite grizzled with age, but still a supreme gunslinger. And the marvellous thing about Eastwood's latest sortie into acting and directing is that it confirms all our expectations. Eastwood is back in his genre – with a very contemporary Western, carrying an ambiguous element of mysticism.

Pale Rider sweeps us dynamically into the action with a strong fight scene between the staunch squatters (led by Michael Moriarty in a strong performance) and the marauders. The episode displays all the stomach churning, swirling photography which has become a mark of Eastwood's direction. However, these first minutes are merely a prelude to the preacher's appearance out of nowhere in answer, seemingly, to a mining girl's prayers. He remains an anonymous and mystical character, and as both script and Eastwood's impassive performance are at pains to establish, an embodiment of good and evil. A pale rider who will bring death.

Despite this mystical angle, or

perhaps to counter-balance it, the main feeling of the film is of a tongue-in-cheek parody of the spaghetti sagas. Eastwood even enlists the villainous support of ex-Bond heavy Richard Kiel.

Sometimes the comedy and mysticism are uneasy fellows, one numbing the effects of the other. But those moments are few. Eastwood's direction is self-assured and pacy enough to hold the interest. A big plus is the exterior photography, the splendid mountains of Idaho doubling for those of California, although some of the interiors are lit much too darkly.

Just a couple of moments jar badly, the two emotional confrontations between the preacher and a mother and daughter who both fall in love with him. They are weirdly embarrassing scenes; I was squirming in my seat unsure whether to laugh or take the episodes as serious depictions of infatuation.

One other grouch is the unfortunate fall into tackiness in the scene when the mining girl Megan carries her very obviously stuffed pet dog to his burial.

Nevertheless, *Pale Rider* is a definite must for Eastwood fans. He is even more inscrutable than usual, dominating the screen. But forget the tense shoot-out, Clint indulges in a strictly parodic finale, where he kills seven men in as many minutes. Do Clint's super-human abilities know no bounds?

Penny Holme



Starring: Clint Eastwood (Preacher), Michael Moriarty (Hull Barret), Carrie Snodgrass (Sarah Wheeler), Christopher Penn (Josh LaHood), Sydney Penny (Megan Wheeler), Richard Kiel (Club). Produced and Directed by Clint Eastwood. Written by Michael Butler and Dennis Shryack. Director of Photography Bruce Surtees.

LONE STAR

The Eighties have been lean years for the Western, but the genre was recently given a well-needed shot-in-the-arm by the protector of the plains, none other than Clint Eastwood.

Pale Rider, his latest venture into directing and acting, is a mystical Western, featuring a nameless preacher (Eastwood) who comes to the rescue of a threatened gold rush community.

Tony Crowley went on the trail of Eastwood in Cannes, visiting him on his yacht to find out more about his biblical background, ecological interests and western ways...



Clint Eastwood is evering, as some say he always is, a little to the right. Nothing political. The world's No. 1 box-office star is completely apolitical—in public anyway. It's just that the British yacht he's lured for his Cannes festival visit is not built with genuine superstars in mind. The ceilings are low. Real low. Eastwood is tall. Real tall. One of the few screen legends who is as tall, if not taller, off-screen as on. So, he has to lean a bit, creaking his neck, as he stands to say, "Hi! Welcome aboard. Good to see you."

He'd be surprised to know he's talking with *Starburst* this time. He hardly thinks of himself as a fantasy star, far from it, even if he does later drop the enticing nugget of news that he's directing one of Spielberg's *Amazing Stories* (see *Starburst* 85).

He's back on the Western trail this month as *Pale Rider*, something of a *High Noon* Duffer. Good, good traditional stuff—and it is such a joy to see him on the end of a Colt again. But it is by no means as exceptionally classic as his last one: *The*

Outlaw Josey Wales (1976), which he once admitted to me, was his best film as director and/or actor. Today he'd add *Brave Billy* (1980) and *Hooky Took Man* (1982) to that private hits-list of "the more enjoyable ones."

Like everything else Eastwood touches, *Pale Rider* is not to be sniffed at. Eastwood remains the most consistently reliable act in town. And all without necessarily, cleaving to his set-in-stone imagery. Oh, he's forever the strong silent type, paring his dialogue to the bone like veterans Gary Cooper and Ben Johnson. "He appears to do nothing and does everything," commented Richard Burton once, "reducing everything and everybody—like Mitchum and Tracy."

Eastwood can however direct, as well. His range of chosen material is more vast than the confines of image could indicate. Rare in the Hollywood he's ruled (from out of town in Carmel) for 21 years, he is forever ringing the changes, trying out new variations, refusing to be blocked by that image, and just go for the money. Consider the difference

between *Escape From Alcatraz* (1979) and the comic-strip mayhem of *The Gauntlet* (1977), and that between *The Beguiled* (1971) with an all-female cast and *Every Which Way But Loose* (1978) with an orangutan. There have been the different cops: *Dirty Harry* Callahan and *Tightrope*'s is-he-isn't-he-the-killer Wes Block last year, and the high flying *Firefox*, and the earlier, mood-soaked *Play Misty for Me*.

In a town built on a rockbed of ego – and bland, endless repetition of success-formulae – Eastwood strives for fresh avenues more often than the rest of the superstar elite. He even dares take time out for that Hollywood abomination, personal films: *The Beguiled*, *Bronco Billy*, *Honky Tonk Man*.

As usual, Warner Brothers backs him to the hilt, sharing any risk, although I hear it is none too happy about a war film he's planning. They'll give in, if Clint insists... once the script is right, because Eastwood is the safest box-office bet this side of Lucas and Spielberg. And why? "Nobody is above the material. If the story's not there, I won't do it. That's the secret of my success. My choice of material. I know what I can do."

Eastwood doesn't play the party route, steers clear of the Los Angeles film community ("but I've nothing against it") and prefers to shoot first, answer questions afterwards. "To go in and make a big fanfare of a movie while you're still shooting it is a waste of time," he insists. "The old-time Press agents used to try hard to get people visiting the sets – when there was no film to write about. Last year, you heard Oscar campaigns starting for some films *before they were finished!* Nowadays, people writing about films are more serious – more educated. They want to see the final result."

So, he's dealing with the Press now. Ever the genial host for a bunch of us having a buffet brunch aboard the good ship, Broka, in Cannes harbour. Eastwood sips white wine. He's never exactly voluble. He just doesn't waste or mince his words. He's laconic with that deceptively lethargic dynamism that is peculiarly American and wholly Western.

"I'm not a social-type of person as a rule," he admits. "I'm something of a recluse. Not too thrilled with the idea of talking about myself. I was always a quiet boy. I'm just not your basic extrovert. But what the hell, actors are not always extroverts. We... bring it out for the moment."

When he gets going – as Norman Mailer said, "You'd have to be around him for a year before you saw his ugly side, assuming he had one" – he talks the kind of commonsense about movies barely heard in Hollywood executive circles. Budgets, for instance, are kept to the strictest minimum on his Malpas productions. "I don't consider it stingy. We pay pretty decently. We're talking about an industry where there's so much waste." He's seen that at close quarters on *Kelly's Heroes* (1970), an anti-war script he loved which went wrong, and on his one and only musical, *Paint Your Wagon* (1969).

As for the great Hollywood god of computer research (never mind, computerised scripts!) and demographic polls "I've never had faith in polls," he spits the word out, slightly. "In polls, you're always gonna be second or third in line, the person who says: 'A Western has made money, I'd better make a Western...' I just make what I'd like to go and see if I was still digging swim-pools and wanted to escape my problems. I read a script and I say: 'Hey! I'd like to see this movie.'"

Just lately, he felt like seeing a Western. He's not alone. His last one was nine years ago and a whole generation has sprung up since then which had never seen Clint Eastwood tall in the saddle – or not on a decent screen with great sound. Well, no one else seemed to be making any – after the demise of *Heaven's Gate* and *The Long Riders* at the start of the decade. Eastwood had a script on Malpas's back burner for five years, and so he set it rolling. He claims no credit for the sagebrush revival his move has caused (even John Cleese has made a Western since then). "It's not like

I'm trying to ride to the rescue of any genre. I liked the story and wanted to tell it."

As the *Pale Rider* – the title stems from the same Biblical quotation providing Fred Zinnemann with his non-Western *Behold A Pale Horse* in 1964 – Eastwood makes the classic entry. Thundering in from a hazy horizon, a literal answer to a maiden's prayer. She's Megan. And her Ma and the rest of the hard-grubbing miners working their penny-ante claims in California Gold Rush are in heap big trouble with the forerunner of one of today's conglomerates in the nearby township. The company boss wants to ruin their land, as well, with his conveyor-belt method of hydraulic mining.

Enter: Eastwood. With the usual glint in his eye. Ready for a rumble.

As always, there is a mythical, – even he suggests, supernatural – side to Clint Eastwood out West. His straggly-bearded hero is eventually revealed to be sporting a clerical dog-collar. He's simply 'Preacher' from that moment on, to one and all, including the malevolent Marshal sent to silence him. But is he or isn't he a Preacher...? The Man With No Name is now The Man With No Fame. Nobody can be quite sure who – or, indeed, what – he is.

When he does talk – a little – about the anonymous character, Eastwood lets slip his true feelings. "I think," he says slowly, "he was, maybe, a young preacher killed by the Marshal at another time." He then changes this line later on to "gunned down by the Marshal." Not killed. Not a spectre – a dream, then? "Maybe," he smiles. "Maybe not. She (Megan) says a prayer and the Preacher is sent down from the mountains." Pause. "Did you notice when she's praying there's almost a face looking from the mountains, big eyes of snow? I like that. I put the sound up there."

Either way, the devil of a marshal gets his due. "The shots on his back just happen to be some of the same configuration he unloads on the marshal. So, the come-uppance has a certain symmetry. I can't take any credit for that. That was in the original script, part of the mythic feeling that, maybe, the Preacher had been sent in as an emissary from the mountains."

"Whether the hero is a supernatural being or an emissary from a higher plane, to me, it's just the spirit. He brings spirit to these discouraged people... encourages them to fight for their rights."



Clint Eastwood donned his director's cap for *Firefox*, in which he also starred.

In fact that very day at his Cannes Press conference, one French critic laboriously suggested that John Russell's Marshal really represented Sergio Leone and therefore, Clint Eastwood was finally ridding himself of his cinematic father by killing him. How Eastwood chortled at that one. "Sergio and I are the same age. He must have conceived me real early!"

The script for *Pale Rider* comes from Michael Butler and Dennis Shryack, the *Gauntlet* team. (They'd been missing Westerns, too. And *Dirty Harry* it seems, as they offered Eastwood their *Code of Silence* script, which he wisely turned down – only to see Chuck Norris hailed as the new Eastwood in it!).

As usual, Eastwood worked on the script with his writers. Although he claims he's no writer, he probably is. He's certainly well-read and just as no one really thought the action-man could direct, he'll surprise us yet as a writer-director. You can bet on it.



Eastwood starred as an American fighter pilot in the fantasy *Firefox*.

"I have thought of writing a screenplay . . . some day. But I've never had the talent. I've always admired people who have the ability to create a whole story out of the air. I work on screenplays all the time; if there's one around not complete, I'll work on it. But I'm just a great second-guesser . . . as most people are."

He has a great facility for picking scripts, spotting the flaws and what he's dubbed "The Squelches" – the stand-out lines like Joe Stinson's in the *Sudden Impact* scenario: "Make my day." Or Harry Julian Fink's from the original *Dirty Harry* . . . "Did he fire six or five shots?" To tell you the truth, I've forgotten in all this excitement. But seeing this is a .44 Magnum . . . Eastwood brings them out when he finds them, adds them if they're missing. *Sudden Impact*'s "Who's we?" Smith & Wesson and me," is a typically flinty Clint line.

In *Pale Rider*, he came up with the missing ingredient – a previous meeting between the Preacher and the Marshal, good and evil. It's vital that the Preacher has another reason for suddenly appearing among the miners and ahead of the Marshal, drawing the fascist lawman to town, in fact. Eastwood, if pushed, will also grudgingly agree he's responsible for much of the script's allegorical input. "I guess so," he says. "I don't know. I guess I like that. I must like it. It's often in there. It's the basic juxtaposition of the forces of good and evil. The good comes to the aid of the little

people. The meek shall inherit the earth. Or whatever.

"It's also tied in with the image of The Horseman from the Apocalypse. I'm not a Biblical scholar, but I've always been fascinated by the mythology of those Biblical stories and how they related to the mythology of the Western. There's nothing really new on the planet. My first Italian picture was taken from a Samurai short story . . . You can make any statement in a Western because it's a ritualized form."

Hence, *Pale Rider*'s ecological concerns. The preacher battles as much to preserve the environment as the miners' lives.

Eastwood also showed his concern with the capital punishment debate in *Hang 'Em High*. He chose *Hang 'Em High* (1968) a little film, over the mighty *McKenna's Gold*. His feel for what's good, bad and ugly goes a long way back. (It would if you landed in *Ambush At Cimarron Pass* aged 28). He also turned down *Apocalypse Now*, *Heaven's Gate* and the film Leone kept chattering about when making their last Western together – *Once Upon A Time In America*. "You could play an Irish gangster," Sergio promised. Eastwood passed, with no regrets.

His instinct is flawless. It was Eastwood, after all, who said "Yeah" the day his agent called during the 1964 hiatus from *Rawhide* and asked, "How'da like to go to Spain and make an Italian-Spanish-German co-production re-make of a Japanese samurai film . . .?"

Eastwood had seen Kurosawa's *Yojimbo* (1961), and thought he was watching a Western. He figured it'd make a good Western, much as Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* became *The Magnificent Seven*. "I was enthralled by the way-out idea of having the hero as the protagonist . . . and not the clean-cut Rowdy Yates type I'd been playing on TV. So, I went over, and got on far better with Leone than I'd imagined, although the language problem was kinda hysterical. We had an interpreter and fudged along. It seemed to work." Seemed to . . . That was what might be called not only his first Western, but his first fantasy. Just as "Dirty" Harry Callahan is a fantasy figure, almost a future-cop. (Not with any future, though. Eastwood thinks the series had run its course. "I don't know where to go, what to do with him now.")

What Eastwood made in Spain as *Magnificent Stranger*, opened as . . . *A Fistful of Dollars*. An apt title. He had basically won the role by default, settling for \$15,000 (much less than his TV income) while *The Magnificent Seven*'s James Coburn stuck out for \$25,000. I somehow doubt Sergio Leone would have gone on and made two more with Coburn. "I still prefer the first," says Eastwood. Eastwood had earned his paltry salary well ("and no percentage deals!"), working on the script, "very strange English, an Italian's concept of Western slang"; refusing to appease Italian backers by over-acting, Italian style; trimming exposition to the bone for the first time, getting to the meat of things; and bringing his Army buddy, the late Bill Tompkins, with him as stunt co-ordinator. In all respects, it was Eastwood branching out, flexing his artistic muscles. The birth of his Malpas company, really. "I figured I could foul up my career just as well as somebody else."

Apart from 144 episodes of *Rawhide* – seven long years in the tele-saddle – Eastwood has only made a dozen Westerns in 49 films. Three of them are among his eleven outings as a well-nigh perfect director – of action and depth. He learned his Western lore at his granny's knee. She used to live in Angels Camp, California, in the heart of gold rush country. He first learned to ride when living with her. He grew up on the hoof during the Depression, moving from one small Californian town to another as his father hunted work. They lived in many places affected by the gold rush period – which means *Pale Rider* is another of his personal films.

He first saw the West, like the rest of us, in the cinema. "I grew up before television was in and saw all kinds of films. Gary Cooper, Randolph Scott . . . John Wayne? Yeah, he was great – in certain films. But I guess Jimmy Cagney was my

favourite. Such fearless energy! And I must've watched *hundreds* of Westerns. I just went to the movies, paid my few cents to be entertained, to be taken on a journey. Never looked at them from the point of view of possibly manufacturing them."

Rauchide took care of his rest of his Western lore-studies. "Six days of shooting, the weekend off, then straight into the next one. Bang! Bang! Bang! *Extremely* monotonous but great experience." It also allowed him to choose his own garb – as important for a cowboy hero's imagery as the suit of lights for a matador. For Eastwood, it usually means a stetson with a brim wider than any of The Duke's – but always lowered over his eyes, all the better to hide them with. Cold eyes, said *Time* magazine. Kind eyes, thought the Indian writer of *Josy Wales*, which is why he sent Eastwood one of his privately printed twenty copies of the book.

More than his snarling, clenched teeth and that vein popping out in his forehead rather like Andrew Stevens' in *The Fury* – Eastwood uses his eyes as much as Dietrich, or Garbo. Shaded. Until ready to burn. Even in *The Eiger Sanction* (1975), he was the only one of the four mountaineers to have a peak on his climbing helmet.

Bronco Billy's white hat was wide enough for the rest of the cast to hide under if it rained. "In *Billy*, you see more of the character's face than usual under his hat, because he's more of an open character. But in *High Plains Drifter* (1973), I had Bruce Surtees keep me backlit all the time. I wanted people to imagine what the character was thinking."

As the *Pale Rider*, the brim, indeed the whole hat, is trimmer than usual. With the dog-collar beneath it and a copy of the *Drifter's* long-coat, the character appears to be hiding nothing – and, in fact, is, hiding everything.

"The wardrobe of a picture is very important with me," adds Eastwood. "The *total* wardrobe. The *total* look you want on the people. For the *Dollars* films, I really worked on the costume. I got some black Levis on Hollywood Boulevard, roughed them 'em up a bit, bleached 'em. The boots, gunbelt and spurs – they came off *Rauchide*. The hat, I think, I found in Santa Monica. The poncho, I picked up in Spain. Wore the same one in all three films – and never washed it, either." (He has now; it hangs on one wall of his Carmel restaurant, The Hog's Breath). And the clenched cheroots? "Found them in a Beverly Hills shop. I chose them – again – for their look. But the best-looking cigars happened to be the *worst* tasting things. Smoking them put me in a bad frame of mind. Made it real easy playing that part!"

As his own Malpaso boss, he keeps a stack of technicians gently employed; notably his superb camera-ace, Bruce Surtees, lighting through his lens darkly for ten Malpaso films now. Eastwood has also promoted several assistants to director status, starting with Michael Cimino on *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot* (1974). He always casts his films away from the usual in-crowd. He used Carrie Snodgrass, for example, as Megan's Ma in *Pale Rider*, and the undervalued Michael Moriarty as her fella.

Eastwood found Moriarty by accident when checking some film on another candidate. Moriarty appealed more. He was saying little or nothing in the scene! Moriarty is proof that Eastwood's deftly planned style of shooting fast is not a case of shooting first and worrying about how it cuts together later. Eastwood shot *Pale Rider* in five and a half weeks. And still found time to change the script as he rolled along. "Originally, I left Moriarty stranded without his horse after dynamiting the hydraulic mine. But I felt the audience would want to see the progression of his character. See him mature. As he takes the child back to the camp, there's a certain leadership about him. He's changed. I also think it's a more satisfying element that he'll obviously go back to the girl's mother."

"We never even wrote any of that into the script, afterwards. I just told Moriarty: Hang on another week, I've another sequence for you . . . and made up a couple lines



there for him. Little things like that evolve in the shooting. In the script, the giant – Richard Kiel – doesn't help the Preacher, either. I just figured he'd come around and be a nice guy."

The 55-year-old kid has become box-office gold by appealing to the fans who grew up with him from the spaghetti West, as well as today's mainly youthful filmgoers. American teenagers said in a recent (Swedish) poll it was Eastwood they most wanted to be.

Eastwood is unperturbed. "Didn't know anything about the poll. Never had a chance to send my mother out to fill up forms! Nice surprise. But I don't know how polls like that are come by. Have you ever met anyone who's been called for a TV ratings poll? I haven't."

With the sun beginning to dip over the yardarm – whatever that means – there seemed time only for a final, inevitable question. Did any of those studio demographic computer print-outs ever suggest he should go into space? "You mean, after *Star Wars*? Yeah, there were some modest space shows thrown my way. None of them appealed to me. I didn't wanna get into somebody else's shows." Pause. "Aren't they really just Western spin-offs? In *Star Wars*, they talk about The Force – but Westerns all use those same elements . . ."



NOON

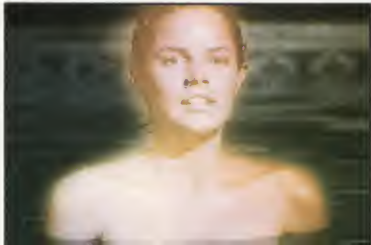




Water seems to be Ron Howard's natural element. Following the success of the delightful *Splash*, Howard's equally aquatic adventure, *Cocoon*, weaves together a fountain of youth fantasy with a tale of benign (alien) 'body snatching'. The two stories ultimately coincide in the film's uplifting climax.

Cocoon relates the mission of a quartet of attractive Antareans (at least in their human sheaths) to rescue their comrades who have spent the last 10,000 Earth years hibernating in pods on the bed of the Gulf of Mexico. However, in their attempt to revive their friends in a swimming pool energised with healing waters, they inadvertently provide a source of rejuvenation for the inmates of a nearby senior citizens' community. The consequences are by turn funny and touching, and confirm Ron Howard's ability to successfully tread the tightrope between sentiment and sentimentality.

A special project of co-producer Lili Fini Zanuck, it took four years to develop the unpublished novel, *Cocoon*, by David Saperstein into the final screenplay by Tom Benedek. "The story is about taking chances and having choices," says Zanuck, "for the older characters, the younger and the Antareans as well." And it was this aspect that appealed to Ron Howard. "I knew I might never have another chance to





do a story with characters this age," admits Howard. "I think the fantasy element serves the characters well, and permits us to say something that's of interest to people of all ages: that something tremendous could happen to you... right around the corner."

Although Howard doesn't consider *Cocoon* a comedy, he feels that humour is integral to the film: "It's a dramatic piece, but there's a lot of humour in it - not the jokey kind we had in *Splash* - but the kind that grows out of situations."

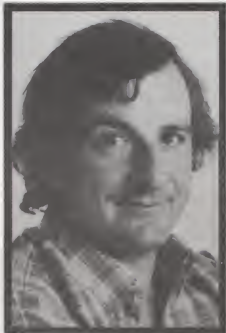
Cocoon is also very much an ensemble acting film, starring Steve Guttenberg, Tahnee Welch and Brian Dennehy, with the elderly cast including screen veterans Don Ameche, Wilford Brimley, Hume Cronyn, Jack Gifford, Maureen Stapleton, Jessica Tandy, Herta Ware and Gwen Verdon. Says Howard of the potentially unwieldy size of the cast: "In each scene where I have all these folk together at the same time, I have to keep in mind their different styles. It's an interesting challenge to try and bring a certain spontaneity and reality to the piece." And while the special effects created by George Lucas' Industrial Light and Magic Company are not allowed to overwhelm the film's human focus, they are sparingly and evocatively used, and ably complemented by the special make-up executed by Greg Cannom and Rick Baker, and the magical underwater photography, courtesy of cinematographer Don Peterman.



Far left, top: Steve Guttenberg and Tahnee Welch - the extra terrestrial lovers. Far left, middle: "In the twinkling of an eye," Brian Dennehy reveals his secret. Far left, bottom: Tahnee Welch all aglow with Antarean affection. Opposite page, top: The three veteran stars - Hume Cronyn, Wilford Brimley and Don Ameche - prepare for a furtive dip in the pool of life-healing waters. Opposite page, bottom: The residents of the senior citizens' community help the aliens in their bid to save their friends. Top left: The Antareans (l-r) Brian Dennehy, Mike Nomad and Tyrone Power Jr., examine the condition of their cocooned comrades. Above: Steve Guttenberg plays the charter boat captain Jack Bonner, who eventually succumbs to the alien charms of his employers. Left: Director Ron Howard shares a joke with Steve Guttenberg.

Douglas Adams

Starburst: Would it be true to say *Hitchhiker* appeals to certain limited groups such as students and professional people?



It all started one fateful day in March 1978, when Douglas Adams' now legendary science fiction comedy, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, was first broadcast on BBC radio and picked up a cult following.

The fourth book in the Hitchhiker Series, entitled *So Long, and thanks for all the Fish*, has recently been published, and the stories have been adapted into a TV series, a stage show, two records, and now a computer game.

Written and designed by Adams, in partnership with computer programmer Steve Meretzky, the *Hitchhiker* game is described as 'interactive fiction', featuring detailed text descriptions on the screen instead of the usual graphics.

Roger Birchall recently talked to author Douglas Adams about his writing... and Hitchhiking fun and games...

Douglas Adams: Maybe. When I actually meet people at signing sessions and so on, I've always been surprised at the extraordinary range who turn up. But obviously there are a lot of college people there.

There are a lot of traditional science fiction ideas and themes in *Hitchhiker*, as well as humour. Are you familiar with a wide range of science fiction literature?

No. I certainly wasn't intending to parody science fiction as such. I'm not really very keen on science fiction. I've got tons and tons of SF books, largely because people keep on giving them to me. I've read about the first fifteen pages of most of them. My girlfriend actually reads more science fiction. I've read the sort of obvious things... some Asimov and some Clarke, the stuff most people have read.

Was *Hitchhiker* accepted by the BBC because of its humour, or because of the great interest in science fiction that *Star Wars* had revived?

I think it was around the end of 1976 when I first presented the idea to the BBC, and it eventually came out in March 1978 about two weeks after *Star Wars* opened over here, and everyone said, 'The BBC are jumping on the *Star Wars*' bandwagon.' I couldn't believe people thought that in two

weeks the BBC had said, 'let's do something like *Star Wars*'. I wanted to do science fiction, and the BBC bought it largely because it was a comedy, and they liked some sketches I'd written.

I thought the *Hitchhiker* TV series worked very well considering it was adapted from a radio show. Were you happy with how it turned out? I didn't like the TV series so much actually. I think we could have done quite a bit better, but there were various people pulling in different directions. We'd had a very good time doing the radio show, and it wasn't the same.

The TV show was well cast, with most of the same actors who'd played the characters on the radio, I believe. Yes. Simon Jones played Arthur, and I'd written the part for him in the first place. Mark Wing-Davy was Zaphod. Steven Moore played the voice of Marvin. But there was a change in Ford Prefect; this is just one of the things about the acting profession. Before the director was ready to start casting, the guy who played Ford on the radio, Jeff McGillan, had just been offered a part in a West End stage show, and he basically had to decide between a bird in the hand and two in the bush. He very sensibly went off to do the stage show, because at that time he wasn't even sure if he would be cast in the TV series.

A *Hitchhiker* feature film has been on the cards now for ages it seems. . . (laughs) Oh, I know! Tell me about it!

What stage is that at, if any?

They're about to renew the option in two days' time. They're still looking for a director. I've had enough of writing that script. I've done several different versions. They've got another writer who's going through my versions at the moment, trying to come up with one that makes the whole thing work, then they're going to give it back to me again.

What input will you have with regard to the film?

Well, I will have a lot of say; but say doesn't necessarily translate into listen.

The *Hitchhiker* phenomenon has taken off in America in the same way *Doctor Who* has. Do you think it reaches a similar audience?

Well, there's an overlap. I think there are a lot of people *Hitchhiker* would appeal to, and *Doctor Who* wouldn't, and vice-versa obviously.

"The next thing I do will be nothing to do with Hitchhiker. I think that will be good for me because it will be nice to sit down and think 'right where do I start?' rather than 'where did I get to?'"

Don't you think *Doctor Who* is popular in the States because it is looked upon as being 'typically English'?

Yeah, and it struck me as rather ironic that after it had been taken up by the Americans, largely because it was so English and therefore different from anything they had, immediately the production staff, I thought, started pandering to the American audience and



Marvin the robot from the TV series of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*.

ignored the fact that what they'd first gone for was its Englishness.

Hitchhiker is now popular all over the world. Do you think the humour still works in the same way when translated into other languages?

One of the problems with the TV show as far as putting it on foreign countries' networks is that there is so much text on the screen that it's not simply a question of dubbing voices. But I believe the show has now been out on German TV, as I notice there has been a sudden upsurge of sales of the book in Germany. I don't know, it's written with so much a view to the actual language that I think it probably struggles along in different translations. I'm not sufficiently good a linguist to say what the other translations are like.

Do you think the books might not be appreciated by some cultures because of the political satire they contain?

There is no reason why any European country wouldn't enjoy them I think, always assuming the basic 'thing' can be translated in the first place.

Your latest book, *So Long, and thanks for all the Fish*, seems more 'adult' in tone than the others. Was there a reason for this?

It's difficult to do a series of books, as I've been doing, without running the risk of lapsing into self-mimicry. After a while, the tone of voice can take over, whereas in the first place the tone of voice is forged out of the way in which you are working on the ideas. So I was very consciously trying to do something different. There is an argument that if I was trying to do something different then why didn't I do something completely outside the field of *Hitchhiker*? Maybe that's a fair argument. The next thing I do will be nothing to do with *Hitchhiker*. I think that's going to be good for me because it will be nice to sit down and think 'right, where do I start?', rather than 'where did I get to?'.

Do you think each book is mostly read by the same people who bought the first one?

Could be. This latest book certainly seems to be selling faster than the last one (*Life, the Universe, and Everything*). My favourite is the second one (*The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*), but then some of my favourite bits are in the third one. The latest one was an experiment which, if I were tackling it again, I would do in a slightly different way. It's funny, I've had a lot of people say to me it's their favourite book since the ►

► first one, which has surprised me to be honest. There is one major common factor between the first and the fourth one which is that they both have a substantial amount of action taking place on Earth, and I think that's something which a certain proportion of the audience responds to. There are slightly more immediate and identifiable things to get hold of!

Do you think the game will appeal more to *Hitchhiker* fans or computer fans, or are they generally the same?

There are a lot of overlaps. Curiously enough, there have been a number of people who have either written to me, or Infocom saying, 'because I'm a fan of *Hitchhiker* I went and bought the computer game, and I think I might go and

"No I certainly wasn't intending to parody science fiction as such. I'm not really very keen on science fiction."

get a computer now to play it on'. So obviously there were people who were buying it because it was *Hitchhiker*, and didn't have an interest in computer games before.

But then also I was told of one guy who had got the game because it was an Infocom game, and really liked it but was having a bit of difficulty with one part, and a friend of his suggested he should check out that detail in the book, and he said 'What book?' I So again, there are

obviously overlaps with people either end for whom the other end is new.

Will this 'all text', as opposed to graphics, type of game be the future of the home entertainment computer market?

I don't think they are necessarily mutually exclusive. I certainly find the text adventure games more interesting because they stimulate the imagination much more. So I think it is more interesting to pursue the direction of this type of game.

Is there an 'ultimate goal' in *Hitchhiker*, as there is with most computer games?

Yes, to get to the end. In fact, the object of the game is discover what the hell the game is!

That's pretty unconventional.

Yes, and I don't know how many people know this, but you can actually ask other characters in the game what they think the object of the game is.

How can a player discover this is possible in the first place?

There are quite a few things put into the game which are absolutely not essential to it, but at some stage you might happen to stumble across just by chance. It's nice to put those kind of things in. There's no sense that every person who plays it has to be steered to finding every single bit of the game. It's quite nice when somebody tries something completely off-the-wall and suddenly finds they get a response to it.

I believe at one point you have to argue with the game, and at another, it ignores you.

Yes. There's a point where it lies to you as well.

I'm sure the computer game will be popular with *Hitchhiker* fans. What is your opinion of the fan following your work has attracted?

I get a bit of feedback asking why don't I take more interest in the fan clubs. But I find it very unnerving to think there is a fan club for something I do.

Do you feel flattered by it all?

Yes, but also slightly unnerved. It's not something which I think is good for somebody to take too seriously, so that's why I can't really get involved with it.

A *Hitchhiker* towel is the latest bit of spin-off merchandise on the market.



i n t e r

Considering the connection with the stories, I'm surprised there wasn't an "official" one available before.

The towels were first manufactured, for fun, by a company who made towels for Marks & Spencers. They just made six on spec. to see if M & S would be interested, and they weren't because they 'don't do merchandising'.

The towels sat on a shelf for years, and then this friend of mine tracked one down and thought 'why don't we try and manufacture them?'. So I said 'Yeah, great'. But I've not really pursued the merchandise thing very strenuously because I'm basically a writer, I'm not in the T-shirt business. On the other hand, if someone comes along with something and it's a nice idea I say 'fine', but it would have to be something reasonably good. The one thing I wanted to do ages ago was a towel, but everybody said 'oh, it won't sell'. But I wasn't really worried, I was told 'the book won't sell', I was told 'the record won't sell', particularly by the BBC. The towels are now selling terribly well.

Do you have any connections with the BBC these days?

No.

You were Script Editor on *Doctor Who* for a year when Graham Williams was producing the show. . . . He and I actually left together.

You wrote a few *Doctor Who* stories during the Tom Baker era, such as *Shada*, which was never filmed completely due to a BBC strike, and *The Pirate Planet*, which contained more comedy than usual for the series. Can you comment on these?

Shada wasn't that great. It's only acquired a notoriety because it wasn't made. It's much more alive in people's imaginations because of that. It had some nice bits in it, but it was certainly wildly over-long at six parts. It had a lot of padding in it. Whereas *The Pirate Planet*, a script I really liked, would have been much better at six parts. Because it had to be cut so heavily to get it down to size, an awful lot of good stuff really went out of the window. *The Pirate Planet* shouldn't have been so overtly funny or jokey as it was. I wrote it with a lot of humour in it, but the point is when you do that, it very often gets played to the hilt. I felt there was too much feeling of 'oh, the script's got humour in it, therefore we've got to wheel out the funny voices and silly walks', which I don't think does it a service. ■

"It's difficult to do a series of books, as I've been doing, without running the risk of lapsing into self-mimicry."

Are you going to be involved with any other computer games?

I'm brewing up a new game with Infocom at the moment, but nothing to do with

Hitchhiker.

Will you be writing any more science fiction or comedy books?

My next book will certainly be humorous in one way or another.

But not science fiction?

Well, I never intend to write science fiction anyway. It's largely that I end up exaggerating so much that it ends up as science fiction.



Above: Douglas Adams (left) with his co-creator of the computerised *Hitchhiker* game - Steve Meretzky. Below: One of the dentrassi, inflight caterers to the Vogan Space Craft, and left also from the TV series of the *Hitchhiker's Guide* - the two-headed Zaphod Beeblebrox (Mark Wing Devey).



Diana Rigg versus Linda Thorson? Sounds ridiculous I know, but there seems to be some evidence of a confrontation in the last two issues of *On Target* magazine. Perhaps I should explain exactly what *On Target* is. It's the official publication of *The Avengers Appreciation Society*, and is edited by its founder, Dave Rogers. An excellent magazine it is too, well produced, nicely illustrated and well worth the cover price of £1.25.

However, I do have an ulterior motive for mentioning it in this column. Volume two, number two of *On Target* seems to be obsessed with this love-hate Avengers girl syndrome. The reason I feel particularly involved is because one of the magazine's writers, Graham P. Williams, in his article called *Look, Stop Me If You've Read This, But...*, takes my comments on Diana Rigg (*Starburst* 67) to task. It reads and I quote, "... pull out that dog-eared copy of *Starburst* from the bottom of the budgie cage and you'll find a four-page spread devoted to Diana Rigg in which Linda (Thorson) is mentioned just twice." Well, Graham, that's because it was an article about Diana Rigg, and before you rip out this page for the pet Macaw, believe me when I say I do not hate Linda Thorson. In fact, when I researched my two earlier *Avenger* articles for *Starburst* 13 and 14, I tried very hard to follow them up with a Linda Thorson piece, but found little co-operation from the 'powers that be', including Thames Television and Thorn EMI. And those two articles were published before the Scala cinema hit on the idea of screening *Avenger* episodes, or there was any talk of an *Avengers Appreciation Society*.

Dave Rogers has no doubt found, since 1978-79, a totally different attitude from the 'powers that be' and certainly his highly informative books on the subject have proved that they're now more than willing to co-operate. But it was a different story back then, just ask Stephen Curry who very kindly lent me his support at the *Marvel Fantasy Film Convention*, when promised *Avengers* stars failed to turn up.



by Richard Holliss

In fairness to Graham he does criticise other writers and their apparent lack of interest for the Linda Thorson stories, so I'm not alone. But more importantly, this kind of petty comment is not a healthy controversy in a fan club devoted to a single television series.

AVENGERS ANEW

On the subject of *The Avengers*, I have now had the opportunity to peruse Dave Rogers' latest book on the series entitled *The Avengers Anew*, (Michael Joseph). Unlike his first book, it's a slightly larger format and features a very striking cover, with photographs from the Diana Rigg episode, *Town of No Return*. This is of particular interest, as the book only contains an episode guide for *The New Avengers*. But then no study of the madcap world of secret agent John Steed, would have been complete without an update on the last *Avengers* series to be made.

At 120 pages, the book is packed with details on *The New Avengers*, plus lots of information and interesting comments on the previous series. The layout is also more pleasing to the eye than the first book. This is probably due to the uphill battle Dave had with ITV books to get *The Avengers* published in the first place. Few people shared his enthusiasm, but perseverance resulted in highly successful sales and worldwide publication.

The section on merchandising has also expanded, and I was fascinated to discover that the giant playing card design (page 109) of Steed and Emma, was actually reproduced from the entry ticket to a fashion show held in 1967. I picked up one of these cards inside an *Avengers* paperback novel back in the late Sixties and had been curious about its origin ever since. There are also photographs of annuals and novelty items making the cover price of £5.95 exceptionally good value. *The Avengers Anew*, with an introduction by Patrick Macnee, is a must for any bookshelf, whether you're a television buff or not.

ON THE SCREEN

Have you noticed how television programmes feature in more films nowadays? So much so that during the endless credits at the picture's conclusion, old TV shows are even mentioned by name. Remember how in *Close Encounters*, we saw and heard clips from *Police Woman*, *The Ten Commandments* and *Daffy Duck*, or how in *Splash*, Disney had the opportunity to show multiple TV screens in a department store featuring footage from *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. It seems to a majority of filmmakers that it is more natural to have actual TV programmes on the television set than fabricated ones. It's also a lot cheaper and it does give the director a chance to indulge himself in a tribute to his favourite movies, remember John Carpenter's use of *The Thing in Halloween*. Even way back in *The Avengers*, the episode *Never Never Say Die* opens with a shot of Emma Peel watching a clip from *The Cybnauts* on her television set. In a recent episode of *V* we saw a glimpse of the dinosaur battle from *Valley of Gwangi* whilst our heroes were watching television. But then *Valley of Gwangi* was a Warner Brothers film and guess who distributes the *V* TV series?



Above: Diana Rigg (Mrs Emma Peel) sports a Sixties black-and-white catsuit. Left: The New Avengers team (left to right) Patrick MacNeé (Steed), Joanna Lumley (Purdey), and Gareth Hunt (Gambit).

Speaking of *V*, this next paragraph applies to fans of the series who are under the impression that they have seen every episode. In fact, there are two versions of episode 3 in which some of our heroes meet up for the first time. In London, viewers saw the historic meeting between Nathan Bates' son, Kyle and members of the resistance in a slave camp surrounded by nasty sand creatures. In various ITV regions, audiences saw Kyle meet up with the resistance, for the first time, inside their Los Angeles headquarters. Which one is correct and why are there two different stories about the same situation? ITV have no idea, so if anyone out there in *TV Zone* land can throw some light on this problem then I'm waiting to hear from you! ♦

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INSIGNIFICANCE

Nicolas Roeg's latest film, Insignificance, collected the prize for technical excellence at this year's Cannes Film Festival. A fantasy drama centred on the bizarre-enough-to-be-true meeting between Marilyn Monroe, Albert Einstein, Senator Joseph McCarthy and Joe DiMaggio (although they are never identified as such), the film recreates these symbols of Fifties Americana and explores notions of relativity and responsibility. The character of Joe DiMaggio (or 'The Ballplayer' if you like) is played by Gary Busey, probably better known for his title role in the real-life 'fantasy' The Buddy Holly Story. Tony Crawley caught up with the burgeoning star in Cannes.

Starburst: How do you feel about the ambiguous titling of the characters? **Gary Busey:** Hell, you know *who* they are. That's the interesting thing for the audience. Makes it a little curious. That *could* be Marilyn, Einstein, McCarthy. That *could* be DiMaggio.

Except it isn't! Your role, more than the others, is completely re-drawn, re-painted. You're bigger than Joe. You're certainly no Italian-American. Apart from being married to 'The Actress', you're not so instantly recognisable.

For me, if I'd played Joe DiMaggio, it would have been pretty boring. So... I didn't even think of him. I played this fella,



Marilyn lookalike Theresa Russell.

a representative of somebody who could be a celebrity. With a vulnerability to him. Here's this big, huge man – I weighed 230 lbs when I made the picture. He could be a massive baseball player. He can knock the ball 500 ft. But he couldn't hang on to his girl. He couldn't have a baby. He couldn't do all the simple things in life that are so...

All together now!
significant!

You obviously didn't bother researching him, then?
What's there to research? Every time he's with Marilyn Monroe, when you look at him in pictures with her, he's very awkward. Nothing matches. Nothing quite fits. But a funny thing happened. When I was being driven to the airport to go to London to do the film, the driver of the car happened to have played baseball with Joe DiMaggio. We got out at the parking lot, there at L.A. airport, and he showed me how Joe stood, how he swung his bat. Ironically, I had one scene when I played baseball and had to swing. So that worked out pretty good.

Otherwise, I just chose vulnerability... He could be a shop foreman in Pittsburgh. Famous in his area. A great bowler... Or, a plumber in Detroit, who has the same disopportunities. Opportunities that are distant to him. He just didn't know how to put it together. He couldn't hang on to his wife.

He paid – they paid – the price of celebrity. Life in the goldfish bowl. The film tries to be about that, too, doesn't it? Exploring our feelings vis-à-vis the famous.



Tony Curtis (the senator).

Right! They're all famous people. All chasing something. They all have burdens. And it ends up that their burdens – when, finally, that bomb goes off – become... insignificant!

What made you snap up the film?

The script arrived. And it said: London; New York. And it had these four great characters. Above all, what sold me was Nicolas Roeg. I was on my way! Seen all his films. *Don't Look Now* (1973), *Walkabout* (1971). And, of course, *Performance* (1970). I've been wanting to work with one of the masters since I started. And there's no doubt, Mr Roeg is the master of film. Whatever his vision is, he's certainly uncompromising.

Had you seen the play?

No, so it was totally fresh to me – and I loved the way it chopped about, went one place to the other. Lovely script. Like the Theatre of the Absurd. I studied the Absurdist in school, and the Greeks, oh... everything from Shakespeare to Beckett. One of my main textbooks, a few years ago, was *Zen and the Art of Archery*. It talked about how to put yourself in a place of purposelessness. This script hit the centre of that target for me each time.

Many changes from the play?

Well, the words are the same. But the blueprint's different. The words are the same, like the characters' burdens and chases are the same. A screenplay is only a blueprint, and Mr Roeg goes in and out of the lines. Between them. Around them. Into flashbacks... flashforwards... and then the big flash at the finish!

Had great fun working with Mr Roeg, that's for sure. Every day was fun. If I'd known what we were doing, I'd have had a miserable time! But if you can't have fun at your job, you've got bad karma to work off. Or, a lesson to learn, I guess.

I'm 40 years old now and I'm just starting to have fun. I spent my life just working so hard at... everything! Putting myself among the right people. Putting myself in the centre of the right people...

Yeah, David Carradine said: "Busey is so Hollywood!"

Not now. Now, I can just let go. That's why we don't live in Hollywood. We live out at The Last Stop. On the beach at Malibu. Forty miles out. About ten miles north of the Larry Hagmans. They're even further out.



The actress (Theresa Russell) and the ball player (Gary Busey).





ey], Monroe and Di Maggio?



In short then, you've got Hollywood taped now?

There are only three things you need to do if you want to make it in Hollywood. Learn how to make your own salad. Learn how to fall in slow motion. And learn how to cry. If you can do those three things, you can make it in showbiz.

That's all?

And never trust a man with three first names!

Didn't you feel hemmed-in in London, shooting in a studio? Most of your films are made on the wide, open spaces.

Yeah, this was all one set. So I'd just run outside a bit. Then, we had the New York trip for the exteriors, with Theresa shooting *The Seven Year Itch* thing. I first worked with Theresa in *Straight Time* (1978) with Dustin Hoffman. . . and my son, Jake, playing my son.

As you say, Roeg is a Master. But you've done well with your slow-motion, crying salads, having worked with some good directors along the way.

Cimino was great. Wonderful fella! Very smart. Precise. Has an eye for perfection. But I had just a small part in *Thunderbolt and Lightfoot* (1974). Didn't even have a scene with Eastwood. I was Jeff Bridges' gardener. Digging ditches. Putting the sprinklers on. Four days work. Jeff and I had met during *The Last American Hero* (1973), we were good friends and he thought it'd be a good thing to do - go up there and make a little money in Montana.

Fred Schepisi, on *Barbarosa* (1983), was one of those guys that can stay up all night. Playing cards. . . if you know what I mean! He can go out in the desert at 115 degrees and climb mountains! Those Australians are something else!

Who's your next director?

Could be Stephen King. Yeah! When I get back, I've gotta take some lbs off in my weight room at home. Then, I'm gonna see Steve about his first directing job, *Maximum Overdrive*, from *Trucks* - his short story in *Night Shift*. The one about trucks running amok and killin' people. He's a really funny guy, that Stephen King.

I don't know if I'm gonna be in the film. I'm still pondering over the script, seeing if it's worthwhile. I'd like to make something else significant, just so I can say how insignificant it was after I've done it!



A weghtry Bussey (230 lbs) as Di Maggio.

You seem to take your work seriously, but not the whole damn job.

I was told once that the first thing a man says when he dies is, "Why was I so serious?" I'm serious about the movies. But the best advice I got when playing Buddy Holly was when Steve Rash, the director, said, "Let's not take any of this serious, or it will come off looking that way and we'll look like fools."

How will it be working with a brand new director like Stephen King?

Exciting! Very exciting. There's something about being on the edge of desperation, an urgency that causes things to happen that you don't know will. . . Which makes all your desperation and urgency kinda. . .



Completing the quartet, Michael Emil as the professor.

I know. All together now!
... insignificant!

You're used to first-time directors, anyway. It was Cimino's first job, and your other Stephen King film was another debut...

Yeah, Dan Attias (Spielberg's E.T. assistant) directed *Silver Bullet*, based on *Cycle of the Werewolf*. Another wild King book. Frightening! *Overdrive* will be that, too. No question. So, yeah, that was an edge of desperation time with Dan. Worked well. We had a good ensemble.

You play the preacher, I suppose?
No, I'm the uncle. Not much in the book. But we fleshed him out for the film.

Gave him some added weight...
That, too. The preacher is played by Everett McGill, who was the head caveman in *Quest For Fire*. Mr Roeg's film being the first one I've made outside of America, was also edge of desperation time. That's part of the effort. It's good for me. So is working in a good ensemble. Jeremy Thomas, the producer, said something pretty neat. He believes that whoever ends up coming to the project, those are the ones who are meant to be involved. It's like water seeking its own level.



The actress (Theresa Russell) casts some light on the situation.



Roeg discusses camera angles on location in New York.

flashback

Excerpts from interviews by Tony Crawley

NICOLAS ROEG ON...

FILMMAKING

"I want to fill each scene up with every piece of reality of that moment in the drama, and you're supposed to be seeing how, emotionally, it affects you. . . It's either going to hit you, like looking at a painting, or not. That's how one approaches every other artform. . . You don't want to work against a book. You're reading it, taking it in. That's why I tried to move movies away from the crutch of literature, too. A good story has a beginning, a middle and an end. That's the real set form of the novel.

Before the printing press imposed its syntax and grammar on it, storytelling was a very different thing. A good raconteur can tell a story in a single phrase. Another can start and — *bonk* — you're asleep. . . Unfortunately, in the mass form — in terms of studio thinking in selling stories or scripts to be made into movies — they even read a script exactly like a book." (1976)

"That's my major problem with studios or production companies. They read scripts in a very literary way. But they have nothing to do with literature. . . (a screenplay) shouldn't be written out shot-for-shot or storyboarded out. I like to keep it open, free, because the artists have to read it. The script is my guideline, very carefully written. I like to feel confident within those terms, but I don't like to feel it's nailed down." (1980)

"A film is, however much a group activity, a very personal projection finally. Something of yourself comes out. If you *like* human beings, I suppose some sense of that is projected. If not, it's a peep show, catering for a peep show market." (1976)

"I like life with hope. I'd hate to make a movie without hope. But it's no use having hopeful movies which don't make you face life a bit." (1976)



Roeg(left) and Busey confer.

Russell recreating the famous Seven Year Itch wind blown skirt.

TIME

"Time is, after all, only something we've invented for ourselves, and it's terribly much a part of our lives. A total shackle. Get outside it and you'll be surprised how many things are affected. It takes barriers down and it also puts them up. . . I'm interested in that very shackle we've given ourselves." (1980)

"I suppose (film) is the closest thing to a time machine. The thought of being able to capture time moving backwards and forwards has always fascinated me." (1976)

CRITICS

"There are three lovely critical expressions. . . pretentious, gratuitous and profound. None of which I truly understand." (1976)

AUDIENCES

"In terms of emotion, there isn't such a gigantic chasm between the exceptional mind, the Einstein, and, excepting anyone with brain damage, the ordinary, or what's accepted as ordinary. I mean, we are all extraordinary. . . The only difference: some make it, some don't. But their intellectual ability is damn well the same. Sometimes it works in an inverse way: those who are of supposedly lower intellectual capability, have greater understanding of the cinematic art." (1980)

ART

"Art is a kind of paradox. You can't see the direct result. It's important, and at the same time, unimportant." (1980)



APING AROUND

Something tells me that Guy Smith doesn't think too much of the human race. In *Throwback*, he turns us all into Stone Age men.

A micro-organism is dropped on the Western world by the Russians, turning everyone into a throwback. The Russians can then invade Britain and so on, safe in the knowledge that no-one will stop them, because the inhabitants are too busy living in caves.

Although by no means a literary masterpiece, this is a fascinating read about how primitive Man (and Woman) copes with such threatening 20th-century objects as doors, and survivors of the 'holocaust'. The few survivors try to find a new way of life while the scientists (naturally a few escaped to an underground shelter) try and sort out 'what really happened'.

The sharpest characters are the throwbacks, who vainly struggle on in a world which hates them. The humans are the usual cynical uncaring lot, interested only in looking after No. 1. And then when it's too late, they finally realise that perhaps they *should* have been more considerate, and perhaps they shouldn't have had *that* affair...

It's a shame that the humans are so inhuman, because it weakens a highly original and imaginative book, even though it tends to become too involved with the romantic side of life sometimes. Mostly it avoids clichés, but the fact that it's the Commies' fault is a bit passé.

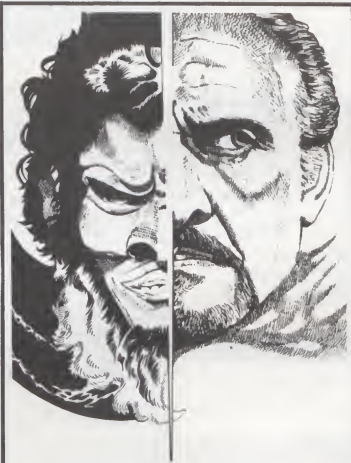
But the only thing that really matters is that it's an entertaining read. And it just goes to show that Darwin was right - we're all apes!

Liz Milroy

... IN THE BELFRY

Along with rats and spiders, bats must be everybody's most hated creature. Horror writers have made the most of this sweet little bundle of fur

Fantasy BOOKSHELF



The *TARDIS Inside Out* is a collection of brief reminiscences by current Doctor Who hot seat holder John Nathan-Turner. As Nathan-Turner had never worked with, or even met William Hartnell, the chapter on the first doctor is short and to the point. The Troughton chapter (Nathan-Turner worked with him on *The Space Pirates*) is also brief, but things expand with the Pertwee section. However, it isn't until we reach the Tom Baker section that the book really comes into its own.

In this section we are taken behind the scenes, particularly in the eighteenth season's 'Nathan-Turner's premier production. Although the text is sparse in places, its informal style provides a good read for any age (yet the book's design lends it the appearance of a children's storybook).

Throughout the book however, are a series of illustrations which range from the patently rushed right up to some excellent full-colour paintings, by Andrew Skilliter (designer of the Target book covers and Profile Prints). The Peter Davison portrait is virtually flawless and would make a marvellous poster, as would those of the two Bakers, Tom and Colin.

The *TARDIS Inside Out* is certainly a book worthy of your bookshelves, although the paperback version is preferable to the expensive hardback one.

and terror, and Guy Smith is no exception.

Judging by *Bats Out of Hell*, the author is highly suspicious of scientists' experiments, particularly when they go wrong - as this one inevitably does. The bats are injected with a lethal dose of a mutant virus, then left in a glass cage to die the most horrible deaths. And it's all Prof. Brian Newman's fault - first he develops the virus, then he knocks over the cage during a lover's tiff with his girlfriend. Some bats escape, and begin to wreak havoc on the world. Surely it would have been better to use an unbreakable cage?

Human nature is at its worst here - no sooner has civilisation started to crumble around the edges slightly, than people start beating the living daylights out of each other, if they're not too busy looting, starting fires and getting infected by the bats.

This is a well-written story of a country under siege. The symptoms of madness and disease are perhaps too well-researched for comfort, and the lifestyle of our wild-life is realistic enough to provide the book with a solid base. The weakest point is the lack of decent characterisation. Brian Newman is too two-dimensional for us to feel anything but dislike for him - although this may be intentional. The rest of the characters are unformed and wobble through the story in a jelly-like manner. You wonder why the bats didn't just finish Newman off in the beginning.

Presumably because he's got to find an antidote before the whole of the human race kicks the bucket. I'm not going to spoil anybody's fun by revealing that he does (finally) find one, but the consequences are dire - not only do the bats die, but so does practically everything else.

Although hardly original, this book has an excellent plot and is gripping, ideal for long boring journeys. So switch on your Walkman, and relax, knowing that such a thing couldn't possibly happen. Or could it?

Liz Milroy

FANZINE FOCUS

It would seem the spirit of British fantasy fandom is not dead. It is alive and kicking in the form of a small-press publication called *Creature*. As the title suggests, it is a fanzine devoted to horror (covering both fearsome films and bloodchilling books).

Fanzines are, unfortunately, an almost extinct species (perhaps due to the now accepted purely visual medium of video), but *Creature* has the pedigree appearance of that rare breed that were so common at one time. With an A4 format, and featuring the inevitable wonderfully self-indulgent articles and awful illustrations, it reminds me of early issues of an American 'zine called *Gore Creatures* (later renamed *Midnight Marquee*) and its subject matter is similar to an old British publication entitled *Dead of Night*. A typical fanish labour-of-love, *Creature* is obviously put together by horror enthusiasts who have more interest in the genre than they have journalistic experience – but then, that's what fanzines are all about.

Improving with each issue (Number Four is available now), *Creature* features include lively interviews with horror novelists Ramsey Campbell and Clive Barker, an appreciation of James Herbert's books, and film reviews of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* and *2010*.

Ron Boyd

To order a copy of *Creature* send 75p, plus 25p towards postage to: *Creature*, 147 Rushden Gardens, Clayhall, Ilford, Essex IG5 0BL.

LAST RITES

Imagine that you inhabit an oppressively isolated world, where death and mutilation have become your obsessive way of imposing a pattern on things. Then you will have some idea of the mind of the central character of *The Wasp Factory*. This marvellous, but harrowing first novel from Iain Banks was understandably turned down by several publishers, before Futura had the guts to put money into it.

It's a startling debut, a taut, well-written horror story, told in the first person by a twisted and permanently pre-pubescent Scottish teenager, Frank Cauldhame gradually discloses details of his life on an isolated Scottish island, where the mundane routine of his existence (listening to John Peel) is mixed with revelations that include the cold-blooded murder of three young relatives. These snippets of his past are tantalisingly disclosed bit by bit, each one comes as a shock, a further piece of the fragmented jigsaw of his mind. The reader is constantly manipulated into the role of amateur psychologist, only to have conclusions ironically upended.

With the precision and know-how of a boy scout, Frank constructs a microcosm of torture and morbidity in his 'wasp factory' (a mechanism for killing insects, constructed inside an old clock face). This reflects not only his obsessions but those of his mad brother, a shadowy figure on the run

from an asylum who, in episodes of pitch black humour, breaks into Frank's self-enclosed world with jarring and sinister phone calls. This chilling humour also surfaces in the bizarre ways Frank killed his relatives, leaving one to float airborne out over the sea on the string of a kite. At such moments the novel edges into fantasy, but always with a sinister grip on reality.

A glowering gothicism surrounds the primitive death rites Frank practises, with his *Lord of the Flies*-style Sacrifice Poles, crowned with dead animal heads, but there are also some rather well-worn old devices in the lonely Scottish location, the local dwarf, and a father with the secret in his study!

But if you have a strong stomach, this is a very original and morbidly compelling book, with a super bang climax. I felt not unlike one of Frank's pursued rabbits – mesmerised by fear, but unable to put it down.

Penny Holme

ELITIST FARE

Isaac Asimov's SF has always leaned towards deductive-story plots. It's natural enough, if you like science in your SF: great scientific insights have the same bubbly feel as when the Great Detective cries "Eureka! I see it all!" The difference is that we understand "The butler did it!" better than we understand " $E=mc^2$!". Asimov's best SF detection creates this heady atmosphere of scientific breakthrough, but without the headaches...

But *Banquets of the Black Widowers* contains twelve non-SF detective tales, bringing this series up to forty-eight stories. (There are a few added fillips for SF readers. For example, Darius Just – who gets a big role in one of these pieces – is a barely disguised Harlan Ellison.) The "Black Widowers" dinner-club is now over-familiar: much the same repartee each time, always the



same setting, the problem always solved by the omniscient waiter, Henry.

Henry is the sort of person who wins International Mastermind and does the *Times* crossword in four minutes.

Henry knows the answer to every question in the "Trivial Pursuit" game, and has memorized entire libraries of science, literature, mythology, linguistics and baseball. In short, if he weren't crippled by modesty, Henry would be a lot like Isaac Asimov.

The trouble with the *Black Widowers* is that their detective problems have a kind of desperate triviality. Each turns on a crumb of fact, but such a tiny, tiny crumb. (I remember one stinker, not in this collection, where the whole "mystery" revolved around the staggeringly inventive idea of a confusion between delivering something "tomorrow" and delivering it "to Morrow". Tomorrow is a New York publisher. Tough luck if you're British!)

Likewise, stories in *Banquets* depend on obscure nineteenth-century American political slogans, baseball esoterica, the windows of French restaurants, and how Plato is pronounced in

Russian. Others are a bit fairer to the reader but remain contrived and incredible. Maybe it's possible to invent a good reason why a man stands to lose millions of dollars if he can't prove which year *The Pirates of Penzance* is set in, but Asimov fails to do so. He's only interested in his semi-clever quibble, and the story falls to pieces around it.

For hardened addicts only.
David Langford

Bookshelf Credits:

Throwback – by Guy N. Smith (New English Library, £1.95).

Bats Out of Hell – by Guy N. Smith (New English Library, £1.75).

The TARDIS Inside Out – by John Nathan-Turner (Piccadilly Press, £4.95)

The Wasp Factory – by Iain Banks (Futura, £1.95).

Banquets of the Black Widowers – by Isaac Asimov (Granada, £8.95).

VIDEO VIEW

Reviews by Barry Forshaw

Ever experienced that moment, a short way into a genre movie, when the words "oh, it's that plot" spring into your mind? If, like me, your video viewing is full of such glazed-eyed revelations, you'll be as pleased as I was with Alex Cox's *Repo Man* (CIC).

It is one of those rare movies that refuse to conform to any set of expectations. Is this a SF movie? There could be two dead aliens in the boot of a car atomising anyone unfortunate enough to take a peek at them. And there's a finale which is a delicious parody of *CE3K*. Or is it a street-wise, tough movie about punks and demented car-repossession agencies? On that level the film works equally well, with sharply etched performances by Harry Dean Stanton, as the hero's cynical guide to the bizarre world of repo men, and Emilio Estevez as the alienated hero. I had a problem with Estevez - excellent though his performance is, I spent the whole film thinking how much he resembles his father, Martin Sheen - distracting!

Cox's quirky visual style whips up a heady brew of influences and references, not the least the fatal opening of an atomic "Pandora's Box" from Aldrich's remark-

able *Kiss Me Deadly* - but it all comes out as his own unique movie. Don't miss this one.

COMIC BOOK CHARACTERS: ONE

John Guillermin's addition to the library of filmed comic strip, *Sheena* (now shorn of its *Queen Of The Jungle* subtitle) has been issued by R.C.A. in striking stereo. The screenplay, by David (*Superman*) Newman, attempts no parody of this distaff *Tarzan*, which is a wise move, as Tanya Roberts is not an actress who can carry off nuance. The action sequences are handled with the veteran Guillermin's usual flair, but Tanya and her journalist boyfriend (Ted Wass) can never bring any life to their characters - which lack even the touches with which Stan Lee enlivened the whole super-hero ethos in the Sixties.

COMIC BOOK CHARACTERS: TWO

Speaking of Stan Lee, E.I.V.'S *The Return Of Captain Invincible* prompts the thought that this movie, clearly a lampoon of *Superman*, actually attempts for humour what the canny Mr Lee did for more straightfor-

ward effect that is to move the hero into the real world.

Here, the very effective prologue (shot in the style of Forties and Fifties newsreels) shows the eponymous crime fighter (nicely played by Alan Arkin) coming to grief at the hands of Joe McCarthy and the H.U.A.C. - his red cape being seen as a subversive gesture! The rehabilitation of the now alcoholic super-hero really plays like Stan Lee's beleaguered characters battling their legion of problems - although I don't remember the bottle being an obstacle for *Daredevil*, *Spiderman* et al. The straighter *Superman* movies, it must be said, boast funnier intentional humour, but Christopher Lee is a solid Villain. The songs? A mistake!

REEVE RETURNS

A final *Superman* note - Christopher Reeve fans among *Starburst* readers should catch his excellent performance in *The Bostonians* (Embassy) which proves that his first-rate playing as The Man Of Steel (and alter-ego) was no fluke.

COMIC BOOK CHARACTERS: THREE

Marvel's super-hero *Daredevil* kept springing to mind during Sam Firstenberg's lively and imaginative *Revenge Of The Ninja*, and in the even better sequel, *Ninja III: The Domination* (Guild) the fantasy/comic book elements have totally taken over. Several mainstream critics (all of whom liked this one) described it as "non-stop comic book action" and the rich leavening of supernatural elements (room hauntings à la *Poltergeist*, possession à la *Exorcist*) make the mixture well-nigh irresistible. The film opens in spectacular style with an evil Ninja decimating virtually an entire police corps - and using tactics that would make the average Marvel character look like a rank amateur. After his death (not an easily accomplished task), the Ninja's spirit possesses a young aerobics teacher (Lucinda Dickey) who is forced to carry out his bloody retribution

- until she comes up against a "white" Ninja (played by Sho Kosugi, who also arranged the breathtaking fight sequences).

Firstenberg handles the action so stylishly, one almost regrets that it's Joe Dante, rather than he, who's slated for the forthcoming *Batman* movie - if anyone could rescue the Caped Crusader from the camp derision of the TV series, it's the excellent Mr. Firstenberg.

WATCHING BIG BROTHER

From Virgin Video, Michael Radford's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* emerges as an intelligent and visually striking adaptation of Orwell's novel. John Hurt is particularly effective as the rebellious Winston Smith, and it's nice to report that Richard Burton's performance as his persecutor, O'Brien, is one of his best-judged and most restrained. The curious synthesis of the present (after all, we know what nineteen eighty-four looks like now!) and a kind of war-torn future to create the "look" of the film is absolutely right. If the final effect is rather listless, this might be said to reflect the depressed society depicted in the novel. Radford's much-publicised rejection of the Eurythmics' score imposed at certain points by his producers is probably justified, but it isn't



Top: Alex Reber discovers that he has Above: "What big eyes you have," Sarah

as ruinous as his protestations might have led one to believe – certainly not as disastrous as some of the rock scores that have been crippling fantasy movies recently.

RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL

As you know, we occasionally move slightly out of the realm of fantasy and SF material to commend an item of interest to **Starburst** readers. Although with Sergio Leone's *Once Upon A Time In America*, the resemblance to a grisly horror film is often pronounced. Leone's long-awaited comeback is a tremendously powerful evocation of life among the Jewish gangsters of the Twenties, with Robert De Niro superb as ever as the tough protagonist. At three hours plus, the film *does* outstay its welcome, but remains a definite must-see.

PEPLUM PECTORALS

Speaking of Leone, he was one of the directors who worked successfully in the Italian muscleman cycle (along with such stylists as Bava and Cottafavi). Now Luigi Cozzi (a.k.a. Lewis Coates) takes up the reins with Lou Ferrigno's revived *Hercules* (Guild). But despite a powerful Pino Donnigio score, this is one for biceps enthusiasts only.



...ome The Incredible Melting Man.
...terson with one of the Company of Wolves.

DIMINISHING RETURNS

The video issue of *The Incredible Melting Man* (R.C.A.) is a little belated – but the very title of the film suggests the glorious heyday of Fifties SF/Horror exploitation movies. However, the reason for catching this more recent effort is certainly not script or direction (William Sachs is no Jack Arnold!) and the much quoted "Golden Turkey" line "Oh God, it's his ear!" directed at a discarded part of the Incredible Melting Man's anatomy certainly warrants its snort of laughter.

But Rick Baker's gloriously gooey make-up concoctions for the eponymous monster (who discards an eye and an arm as well as the aforementioned ear!) is satisfyingly repulsive. However, if you're looking for ideas and craftsmanship in movies with hokey Fifties titles, it's back to Jack Arnold, I'm afraid.

ENGLISH LYCANTHROPY

I think everybody knows by now that *The Company Of Wolves* (Vestron) is unlike any other film you may have seen. To qualify that – it *is* like *The Howling*, or Michael Powell's delicious colour extravaganzas of the Fifties, or Laughton's *Night Of The Hunter*, or Cocteau's *La Belle et La Bête*. But Neil Jordan's visually rich movie is more than just the sum of its influences. Written with Angela Carter, and based on her "explosion" of the undercurrents of fairy stories, *Wolves* explores a Freudian world of brutal imagery with Little Red Riding Hood at the centre of its myth-spinning. The framework is an "Alice"-like dream, with the heroine (Sarah Patterson) creating her fairy-tale world while lying in a Twentieth-Century bedroom.

Of course, **Starburst** readers will be particularly interested in Chris Tucker's spectacular wolf transformations, with Stephen Rea's sequence notably effective (all glistening, flayed skin and splitting muscles). But these scenes are not treated



in the Landis/Dante fashion, i.e. as set pieces – rather they're part of the whole "fabulous" (in the literal sense of that word) scenario. However, those wishing a straightforward, linear narrative should look elsewhere. (A final note: George Fenton's imaginative score captures exactly the right colourful palette for the story-book visuals).

NEW & FORTHCOMING

From CBS/Fox, Avi Nesher's new version of *She*, updated to a post-holocaust setting with Sandahl Bergman as H. Rider Haggard's immortal character. EIV has *Mutant II* and *Night Of The Alien* (with designs by Giger!) Thorn EMI has a budget re-issue of *Amityville II*, while Medusa presents *The Big Score*. CIC has the new Richard (Psycho II) Franklin film, *Cloak And Dagger*; they also have the spoof *Top Secret*. Warners have their sights trained on John Milius' *Red Dawn* and Martin Scorsese's *Raging Bull*.

BRIEF NOTICES

The (almost) last gasp of Hammer Horror, Roy Ward Baker's *Legend Of The Seven Golden Vampires* has been issued by Warners. But this kung fu ghoulash is really for Hammer completists only, even Peter Cushing fails to rise above the material. Warners have also issued the abbreviated version of Stephen King's *Salem's Lot*. The longer version, in its TV movie limitations, was surprisingly successful at evoking dis-

quiet in its small town replay of Stoker's *Dracula* plot, and quite a lot of Tobe Hooper's tension survives in this version. Interestingly enough, this version (being the cinema release print) contains a couple of details not shown on BBC – such as the aftermath of one of the character's impaling on a wooden hall display. But this doesn't make up for one annoying loss – the fate of Bonnie Bedelia's character, now vanished.

Melanie Reed's *Trial Run* (CBS/Fox) is quite successful (after a sluggish start) at ringing some chilling changes on the "woman jeopardised in lonely cottage theme". It's a shame, though, that the "carefully concealed" identity of the assailant would be evident even to those who find the questions on *Family Fortunes* an intellectual challenge.

With *Trancers* (EIV), Charles Band transcends his capable but unremarkable exploiters, to produce a movie which has both imagination and style. Basically a variant on *The Terminator* (or Harlan Ellison's *Soldier*, if you want the real original) this clever and well characterised piece has Tim Thomerson as a futuristic cop tracking a villain to present day L.A. There are some excellent SF ideas, such as a "long-second" watch that places the hero in an "elongated" time scale compared to those around him. This, of course, comes from H. G. Wells' *The New Accelerator*, but what SF concept *didn't* that Victorian gent originate?

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There are a lot of strange people in the world. I know that for a fact because most of them end up sitting behind me in the cinema. Some of them even follow me around from cinema to cinema. It's not that I'm getting paranoid or anything, but there's one guy in particular who's definitely following me around. He's tall, thin, always wears a plastic mac, has thick glasses and carries a large bag containing about fifty bags of crisps, a dozen cans of soft drink, a gross of Kentucky Fried Chicken legs and endless packets of some unidentifiable lolly that can only be consumed by sucking and chewing simultaneously.

I never see this character in the cinema when I arrive. Oh no, he's much more subtle than that. He waits until my guard is down – sometimes he doesn't arrive until the main feature is just starting – and then there's the bang of a door being flung open and then the *clump clump* of his heavy feet in the row immediately behind me. He collapses into a seat with such impact that the floor vibrates and then, after a pause, the dreaded bag is opened and the auditory onslaught begins...

Now I'm a mild-mannered, kind-hearted sort of person (I once spent several hours putting a splint on the broken leg of a fly – to give you an example of how kind I am), but one day soon I'm going to go berserk, leap on the guy and, for starters, shove all fifty bags of crisps down his throat *unopened*.

I only hope I don't leap on the Duke of Edinburgh by mistake. According to *The Guardian* His Royal Highness is not too hot when it comes to a cinema etiquette (something he has in common with the majority of his subjects). *The Guardian* told the story of how someone found themselves sitting in front of the Duke at a screening of *The Emerald Forest* at Film House in Edinburgh. Apparently the word the Duke most likes to fling at the screen is "Twit!". "Twit!" he will moan at a sensitive moment in the plot. "Oh God what a twit!"

I thought, when I was reading this, that the Duke was referring to the film's director, John Boorman, but no, these comments were directed at the characters on the screen. As the *Guardian* revealed: "...He reserved his greatest show of exasperation for the most tense moment in the film, at which he exploded: 'You b— fool – Use the door!'"

There was no mention of whether or not he was eating crisps while this

It's only a MOVIE

A Column by John Brosnan



B. BGS

was going on. Even so I hope I don't run into him at any of my regular cinema haunts, or else there might be trouble. Be great, wouldn't it, to tell some loudmouth in a cinema to shut up and then find yourself in the Tower charged with high treason.

BAGS AND ALL

Cinema audiences can be a real

pain, but on the whole I'd prefer to see a movie in the company of other people than by myself. Barry Norman, however, disagrees. Some time ago the *Sunday Times* colour supplement ran 'A Day in the Life of Barry Norman' in which our Bazza, while telling the readers what a hard, demanding job he had, revealed that he quite often saw films all by himself,

and he preferred it that way. "If you're watching a comedy with 200 people in off the streets, all the bright people laugh when a joke comes up. Then when they're waiting for the next one, all the dumb people suddenly get the first joke and drown the second. You're sitting there, fuming, thinking, 'Christ, what was it Woody Allen said?'"

And you thought Barry had it easy. Instead there he is fuming away while all those people 'off the streets' keep laughing in the wrong place...

But hang on a sec – Bazza never sees films in the company of people 'off the streets', he sees them in those neat little preview theatres around Soho where the audience is made up of other critics. People like, er, me...

Ohmigod, I remember now! I once laughed in the wrong place during a Woody Allen movie! It was at the screening of *Zelig*, I think. I had no idea Bazza was in the audience...

To think that I am to blame for driving Bazza away from his fellow men and women, forcing him to view films in conditions of lonely solitude. It will be heavy burden for me to bear for the rest of my life.

Elsewhere in the *Times* piece Barry revealed some of the psychological stresses that being a film critic entails: "Usually I don't feel too happy, but philosophical. The only way you can survive is by persuading yourself that this one could well be the film that makes up for all the dross."

My sentiments exactly, Bazza. Sometimes I feel like throwing in the reviewing towel, worn out by the pressures of drinking all the free booze they give you in the preview cinemas, but then along comes a movie like *Sheena – Queen of the Jungle* and I feel personally and professionally fulfilled. I'm sure Bazza must have felt the same way about *Sheena* because he hasn't retired from the job either. I know because I keep ringing up the BBC to see if they need a replacement for him yet.

No, seriously, I think I'd be a more than suitable replacement for Barry. Not only do I have the same bags under the eyes but I've been told by people that I'm egotistical, facetious and a right pain in the nether-regions, all of which makes me perfectly qualified for the job.

The only drawback to assuming Bazza's golden crown is that I'd miss those people 'off the streets'. No sounds of crisp packets, no talking, no laughing...

Yes, it would be hard at first but I'm sure I'd get used to it. ♦



The Filing Cabinet of DR. SALLY GARY

Do you have a problem that you're too embarrassed to talk about? Are you bewildered by your own ignorance of the fantasy genre? Then drop a line to the Starburst Doctor. She's here to help. Remember, a problem shared is a problem solved...

CORRECTION!

Ha! I've just had a letter from Michael Dee of Eltham, London (my home turf!) full of corrections and additions to a query which first saw light here, oh, *months* back. The good news is that it's not me Mike has written to correct, but Keith Dudley of Hammer International. Thanks, Mike. It's nice to know that I'm not the only one who gets it wrong. The info is about Mike Raven, who was a friend of Dee's in the Seventies. Apparently, Raven was born in London (not South Africa) and was only dubbed in the Hammer movie, *Lust for a Vampire* (1973). His own voice can be heard in his other three movies; *Crucible of Terror* (1971), *I, Monster* (1971) and *Disciple of Death* (1973). Mike goes on to say, "I've not been in touch with Raven for some years, but I have no reason to believe he is not still lobster fishing, and composing operettas in North Cornwall with his wife Mandy and their children."

'NUTHER CORRECTION

Oh, I love it! I had a beautifully typed letter from down-under from Rod Melloy, who begs to point out that another info-donating reader got it wrong. Lee Hopewell claimed in SB82 that he alone knew what sort of car Rockatansky drives in the *Mad Max* pictures. Wrong! Rod says that the

"Last of the V8 Interceptors" is a "Two-Door, Ford Falcon XB GT, powered by a 351 cu in V8". Rod goes on to list all the extra bits of bodywork stuck on and where you can get them. But this is *Starburst*, not *Custom Car* so I left all the technical stuff out! Hope you don't mind, Rod...

THE MAKEUP MEN

Neil Roberts writes to tell us that Nigel Green also appeared in *Gawain and the Green Knight* (1973), see SB 77 for the full story! Neil also wants a short life history of the famous make-up family the Westmores and genre filmogs for the whole genre.

The thing is, Neil, that to answer that one properly would take a whole column. I'll have to pass on the life history and see what I can do with the filmographies (I seem to remember there is a book called *The Westmores of Hollywood* by Frank Westmore, 1976).

Bud Westmore: *Abbot and Costello Meet Frankenstein* (1948), *It Came From Outer Space* (1953), *This Island Earth* (1955), *Creature from the Black Lagoon* (1954), *Revenge of the Creature* (1955), *Tarantula* (1955), *The Mole People* (1956), *Man of a Thousand Faces* (1957), *Monster on Campus* (1958), *Munster Go Home* (1966), *Soylent Green* (1973).

Wally Westmore: *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1932), *Island of Lost Souls* (1933), *Murders in the Zoo* (1933), *Death Takes a Holiday* (1934), *Conquest of Space* (1955), *Colossus on New York* (1958), *Project X* (1968).

I stopped when I got to this point, Neil. It was beginning to look like a lifetime career. So with the other Westmores; George, Monty, Perc, Ern, Frank and Ringo, you're on your own!

AUSSIE ARKIE

Iain Wynn-Jones wants to know if "the girl in the shower in *Razorback*" was the same girl as in *Mad Max 2*. Don't give me much to go on, do you, Iain? I'm going to guess that you mean Australian actress Arkie Whiteley, who played Sarah in *Razorback* (1984). If that's the case then, yep, Arkie was in *Mad Max 2*, as the blonde who almost runs off with the Giro Captain (Bruce Spence).

MIXED BAG

A gaggle of questions from John Lau of Liverpool. First question: "Why does C-3PO have one silver leg?" I don't know, John. Why does C-3PO have one silver leg?

Second Question: "The Beeb recently showed a film about a wax museum and an axe murderer. Every time the bad guy was going to turn a victim into chopped liver, a

strange screeching sound was heard on the soundtrack. Can you tell me what was the daft sound effect?" Uh, okay. The film was *Chamber of Horrors* (1966), a failed TV-pilot for a series that never happened. The noise you're talking about was the 'Horror Horn', which, coupled with the 'Fear Flasher' served to warn audiences about impending nastiness. But, since this was originally for TV, the nastiness never seemed to me to be worth Horror Horning or Fear Flashing about. For the record, the film was directed by Hy Averbeck, written by Stephen Kaddel and starred Wilfred Hyde-White, Cesare Danova, Patrick Wymore, Patrick O'Neal and Tony Curtis.

Third question: "Where can I get the soundtrack of *Tenebrae* on cassette? I've tried all the obvious places." Dunno, John. Maybe one of the other readers knows.



The work of Wally Westmore. Fredric March in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.



Above: Richard O'Brien, [that's normality!] with Patrice Quinn in *Shock Treatment*.

Below: Artwork for *Spacehunter*.



A QUICKIE

"Could you please tell me," writes Cheryl Shematt (is that right?), "which years *Rocky Horror Picture Show* and *Shock Treatment* were made? I'd also be grateful if you could print a picture of Richard O'Brien without make-up and looking normal. "Right you are, Cheryl. The years are 1975 and 1981. And here's a picture of our Rich, looking as close to normal as is possible.

IT'S CALLED BLACKMAIL

A scribbled note from Andrew Chrysostomou turned up in my postbag. It reads: "I am suffering from lack of information on *Spacehunter* actress Molly Ringwold, which can only be cured if you print all you know about this lady in your column. If you do as I ask, I may not tell anyone that you forgot to include *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger* (in which he played the Minotaur) in the Dave Prowse filmography."

So tell 'em. See if I care. I admit, with no shame, that I know nothing of the career of Molly. Besides, Prowse didn't play the Minotaur in *Eye of the Tiger* ... Peter Mayhew did!

HAMMER ON THE BOX

Julian Carter rounds off this month's column with a request that *Starburst* give more coverage to the Hammer range of films. You're asking the wrong person, here, Julian. Requests of this sort are best directed to the guv'nor, Cefn Ridout.

As to your query about *The Legend of the Seven Golden Vampires* ... No, I don't think that *has* been on TV yet. Wonder why?

That's it for another month. If you have anything that's been bothering you, why not drop me a line. That's what I'm here for ... Send all your fantasy questions to:
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